

# **PARADOXES AND CULTURAL CHALLENGES**

## **Case of Moroccan manager returnees and comparison with Chinese returnees**

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### **Introduction**

Human beings are complex, unpredictable, and bear a social and cultural heritage. Indeed, human beings build, through relationships with others, their own identity. According to Chanlat (2008), every group of human differs from the other when they get in contact. Inevitably, organizations, as a social environment according to authors like Weber (1905), Barnard (1935), Mayo (1933), Hofstede (1980) and D'Iribarne (1998) and many others, hold social interactions. This study aims to shed light on a social phenomenon that occurs in many Moroccan organizations (Alami, 2009). Since the Moroccan public education system failed to provide high education standards and cutting edge knowledge to students in almost all universities and schools, many parents have decided to send their children study abroad to receive a good education. Canada, France, the United States, among others, received each year the largest share of Moroccan students (Ministry of education, Morocco, 2007). It's not difficult to imagine that these Moroccan managers, well educated and steeped in western culture, sometimes for more than 10 years, find themselves out of line from their teams and the way organizations are managed. Based on our own experience, we would like to know, on the one hand, if this phenomenon is widely spread among managers who studied abroad. In other words, we wanted to know if managers suffer from the same gap when comes the time to apply, on the field, what they have learned during their stay abroad.

On the other hand, we were interested in knowing what these managers have done in terms of behavior, strategy and key factors of success, in order to overcome such cultural gaps and to improve their organizations' performance despite difficulties that I found during my research. Indeed, managers are reluctant to talk about their failures. Moreover, failure is unacceptable in Moroccan culture (Alami, 2009).

Before talking specifically about this case, we are going to present briefly what authors have stated on cultural differences and issues. Then, we will make out a portrait of how management science is seen by local organizations and of the most important characteristics of Moroccan culture through Hofstede's matrixes (1980). This will lead us to an overview of management practices and help us to understand certain behaviors inside organizations.

The last part of this case will present results of research we have done. To complete this study, we used a questionnaire and handed it out to over 100 managers. We received 60 replies, a number good enough to draw some strong conclusions from results because we have quickly reached saturation. Finally, this research aims to answer the following question: Why do traditional managerial concepts taught in western universities and business schools not work as expected in terms of productivity, control and team management, in a different cultural context?

## **1. Review of literature**

The influence of culture and traditions on an organization's performance has not always been considered as a critical factor. Indeed, in the beginning of the industrialization era, many thinkers like Taylor tended to consider humans as commodities and variables to be fit when productivity should improve. Basically, they believed that revenue was the most important tool to be used to do better. Human resources were not considered as a part of competitive advantage leverage as Hamel and Prahalad (1992) have stated in their famous research. The

dominant theory at that time was “mechanistic”, which meant human resources were to be managed like machines (Morgan, 1986). We had to wait until the thirties to see authors talking about the social dimension of human beings within organizations. Mayo (1929), Maslow (1930), among others, have stated that humans are not machines but beings with needs, feelings, motivations and emotions. Proponents of Fordism and Taylorism must face the fact that performance and success rely not only on money but also on making employees feel safe and work safely, communicate and share emotions. In other words, there is no “one best way” to reach economic and performance targets within organizations. In the late seventies and early eighties, authors like Hofstede (1980), Crozier (1977), Chanlat (2008) and D'Iribarne (1998), among many others, believed that culture is embedded into organizations, which basically means that employees don't let their traditions, culture and habits at the doorstep when they come to work.

However, the path that led professionals and scholars to consider culture as a key factor of performance was long and laborious. In fact, many schools of thought marked the history of organizations. Each school was, at its time, considered as the best way to run and manage firms. Adam Smith (1776) was certainly the first author to come with the theory of scientific organization and proposed rational templates and concepts to improve productivity mainly through division of labour. This theory was strongly implemented in the early 19th century.

Nowadays, scientific organisation of labour is still widely used to reduce costs, build economy of scale and pressure employees. Then came the school of human resources, largely dominated by the theory that human beings have both physical needs and emotional needs. Mayo, Maslow, Likert, Herzberg, among others, have clearly shown the role of emotions, work conditions and relationships among employees, managers, supervisors and CEOs.

In the early 60's and throughout the 70's, a new theory emerged: The contingency school of thought (Burns and Stalker, 1962). Basically, this theory says that organizations should not

underestimate the role of their environments. Authors like Mintzberg (1982), Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), Pugh and Hinings (1967), postulated that managing human resources according to the school of human relationships does not explain why some firms succeed while others fail. Practitioners should pay attention to their environment. In other words, these authors come with basic questions: Why do some impressive and high-performance organizations succeed tremendously without using the so called “scientific organisation of labour”? How can we explain that in some cases firms that followed the “one best way” actually did poorly and were counter-productive and inefficient?

Based mainly on Woodward (1965) and Mintzberg’s research (1982), literature gives evidence that an organization’s structure is deeply related to contingent factors like technology or public power for instance, contrary to the classic school which promulgated division of labour and neglected outside influence (Taylor, 1917).

Contingency school of thought comes with its own drawbacks, however. With globalization strengthening, firms become multinationals and face new challenges beside their own environments: Cultural issues. Old theories don’t provide contents and concepts to understand and overcome such obstacles. Theoreticians have developed a new paradigm based on what they call “intercultural management”. The most famous of them is Hofstede. Even if we can observe some reflections during the sixties (Webber, 1969), literature has been paying attention mostly to cultural issues in the early eighties. It helps to understand the connections that govern the relationship between management and culture (D’Iribarne, 1989; Hofstede, 2001). In fact, it seems that the cultural factor is more often seen as a problem than a solution. It is thought to generate dysfunctions, conflicts and weak performance (Chanlat, *et al* 2008).

## **2. The importance of culture**

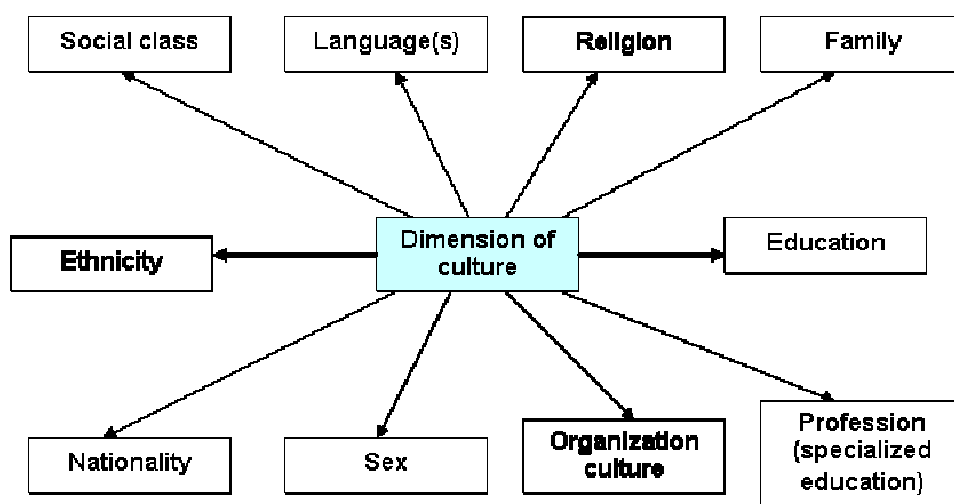
Anthropologists define culture as a human group's social heritage. It includes their political systems, religions and beliefs. On the other side, culture is seen as a spectrum of traditions,

habits and social ties among individuals. Human behavior is considered as a social heritage not as a genetic heritage (Malefijt, 1968). Hofstede (2001) argues that culture is a key element that affects individual behavior when comes the time to interact with others or to manage conflict (David, 1991). Then culture is seen as a powerful tool that helps to shape individual perception (D'Iribarne, 1998; Geertz, 1974).

Research in cultural issues has given birth to new words like “Cultural differences” or “psychic distance” (Chanlat, 2008; Hofstede, 1980). Cultural difference is the social-cultural distance or gap that exists between a local culture and a culture from another country or region in terms of doing business, language, politics, social systems and ethics (Xin & Pilluta, 2002). Lane (1996) argued that the larger the cultural distance, the stronger are adaptations to fill the gap.

In fact, many definitions have been formulated to define culture. Usunier (2005) defines culture as a multi-dimensional concept related altogether.

In the chart below, we could see the set of dimensions as Usunier (2005) has stated.



Source: Marketing across culture, Usunier (2005)

Globally, culture is a tool which allows us to describe and understand present and future human behaviors (Aktouf, 1990). But culture may be distorted and subjected to constraints and confrontation. Globalization is probably the best example of that. Years of cultural exchange and proximity in developing countries drove people to adapt foreign culture and tradition. For instance, Moroccan people have never eaten fast food before McDonald's came to the country. Now, going to Mc Donald's is a sign of being "in".

From organizations perspective, cultural diversity presents advantages and disadvantages. Among risks that might occur in a different cultural environment, there are the ambiguity and complexity of communication that may lead to confusion. It might be a source of discrepancy and disorder when managers try to set strategic goals for example (Chanlat *et al*, 2008),. On the other hand, evolving in a different cultural context may open new opportunities for organizations to grasp original ideas, diversity of opinions and relevant ways to solve problems (D'Iribarne, 1998). It generates, according to these authors, better creativity that may lead to improved productivity and ease of exchange with business partners from abroad for instance.

### **3. Hofstede's culture dimension**

In his web site, Hofstede defines culture as "a source of conflict rather than synergy. Cultural differences are a nuisance at best and often a disaster." This definition of culture by Hofstede seems really accurate when you think of the huge efforts multinationals do to mitigate cultural risks. L'Oreal for instance has implemented specific programs for managers sent abroad to make sure they won't make any cultural mistakes, especially in Middle Eastern countries like the United Arab Emirates or Saudi Arabia. For example, shaking hands has completely different meanings in Western Countries and the Middle East. While it means the deal is sealed in the United States, it means discussion has just begun in Saudi Arabia.

The idea of Hofstede (1980) is to describe national cultures according to his research. These ideas were first based on a large research project into national culture differences across subsidiaries of a multinational corporation (IBM) in 64 countries. Subsequent studies have been run to complete research. Together, these studies identified and validated four independent dimensions of national culture differences, with a fifth dimension added later.

These dimensions are:

- Power Distance
- Individualism
- Masculinity
- Uncertainty Avoidance
- Long-Term Orientation

Instead of presenting each dimension separately, which might not be really relevant, we preferred to compare these dimensions toward Arabic and Western countries where most Moroccan managers go to study. Before doing this comparison, we should say that the Hofstede Model of Cultural Dimensions can be of great use when it comes to analyzing a country's culture. There are however a few things one has to keep in mind.

Firstly, the averages of a country do not relate to individuals of that country. Even though this model has proven to be quite often correct when applied to the general population, one must be aware that not all individuals or even regions with subcultures fit into the mould (D'Iribarne, 1998). It is to be used as a guide to understanding the difference in culture between countries, not as law set in stone. As always, there are exceptions to the rule.

Secondly, the data has been collected through questionnaires, which have their own limitations. Not only that, but in some cultures the context of the question asked is as important as its content. Especially in group-oriented cultures, individuals might tend to answer questions as if they were addressed to the group he/she belongs to. While on the other

hand in the United States, which is an individualistic culture, the answers will most likely be answered and perceived through the eyes of that individual. For these reasons, Hofstede's approach to intercultural management might present some weak points. For instance, Arab countries have been gathered in the same cultural area while actually it has been demonstrated that Gulf countries and Arabic North African countries are deeply different although they share the same religion and the same language (D'Iribarne, 1998).

### **3.1. Masculinity**

In feminine cultures, such as the Netherlands, it is preferred to overcome the conflicts through compromise and negotiation (De Bony, 2005; D'Iribarne, 1998). In a masculine culture, family teaches children confidence, ambition, competition and organization. People focus on results. In a feminine society, the family teaches children modesty and solidarity. In this case, organizations are likely to reward people equally (Bernard, 1994) whether you are a man or a woman.

Arab countries have a median value of the index of masculinity. This could be explained by the fact that for these countries, Islam preaches the law of retaliation (tooth for tooth) but strongly suggests to the believer, if capable, to pardon in cases of conflict, aggression or serious misconduct.

Trials for defamation, breach of trade rules or recovering of one's rights are very rare in Morocco for instance. In these countries, an intermediary who might be a relative is strongly recommended to manage and resolve conflicts.

### **3.2. Long-term orientation**

For Arab countries, the concept of loss or gain of time is relative. For these countries, we never lose time. Instead, we share time. An Arab proverb says that "Who wants to go fast is delayed". In other words, people are not in a hurry. You work for a living but also to please God and relatives. Anxiety is rather low in Arab countries because Muslims believe in destiny.

"If my future is already written, why be worried," said Muslims. The chart below shows differences among countries.

**Is time precious, is time money?**



Source: Adapted from Dupuis (2005)

### 3.3. Collectivism

The index Individualism / Collectivism is certainly one where the differences are greater between Arab countries and the West. The chart below, derived from research of Hofstede (1980), illustrates the gap between Arab countries where group interest takes precedence over individual interest.

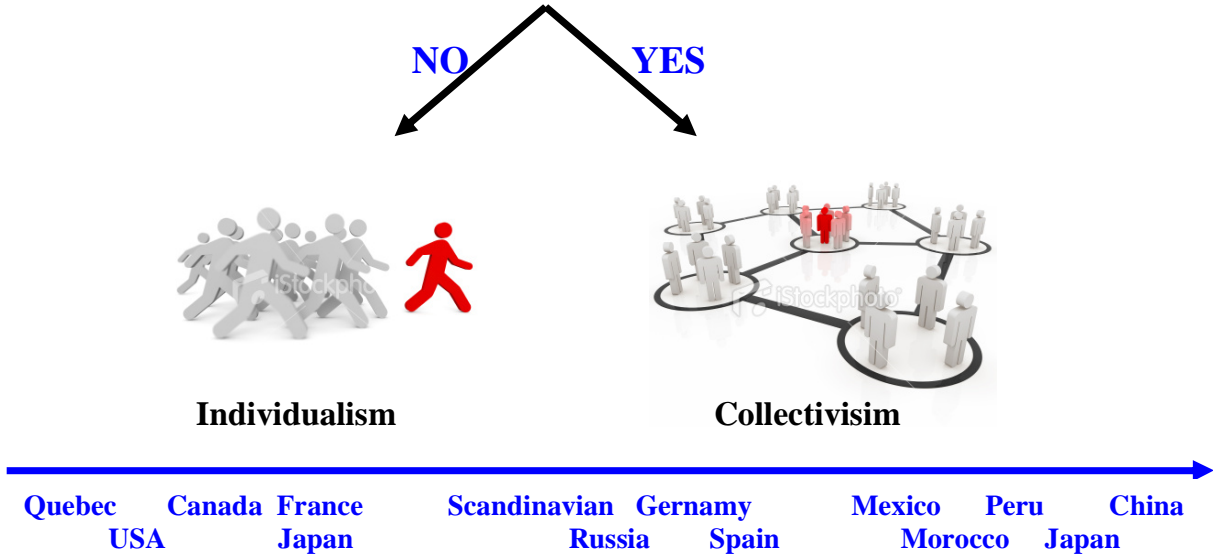
The well known family solidarity of Arab countries is the most striking aspect, knowing that the first group we belong to is family rather than extended family. The children remain

dependent on their parents to old age and living under the same roof is a sign of solidarity. Girls, in particular, do not leave the house of their father before marriage and in some cases may stay beyond. Sometimes, solidarity is strongly linked with honor. Alon and Lee have stated (2004), “the judgment of an individual's behavior was based on whether he did any thing to honor the large group to which he belonged”.

Hofstede's research also showed that the richer a country, the more people tend to behave in an individualistic way. The special case of the Gulf countries, rich in oil, shows the impact of Arab cultural roots (Bernard, 1994).

However, grades must be made here. In former colonial countries such as the Maghreb, the mixing of Eastern and Western cultures, open borders and the exponential growth of trade and migration have, in certain segments of the affluent population of poor Arab countries, tipped the balance toward greater individualism.

**To what extent do individuals have obligations toward the group they belong to?**



Source: Adapted from Dupuis (2005)

**3.4. Power distance**

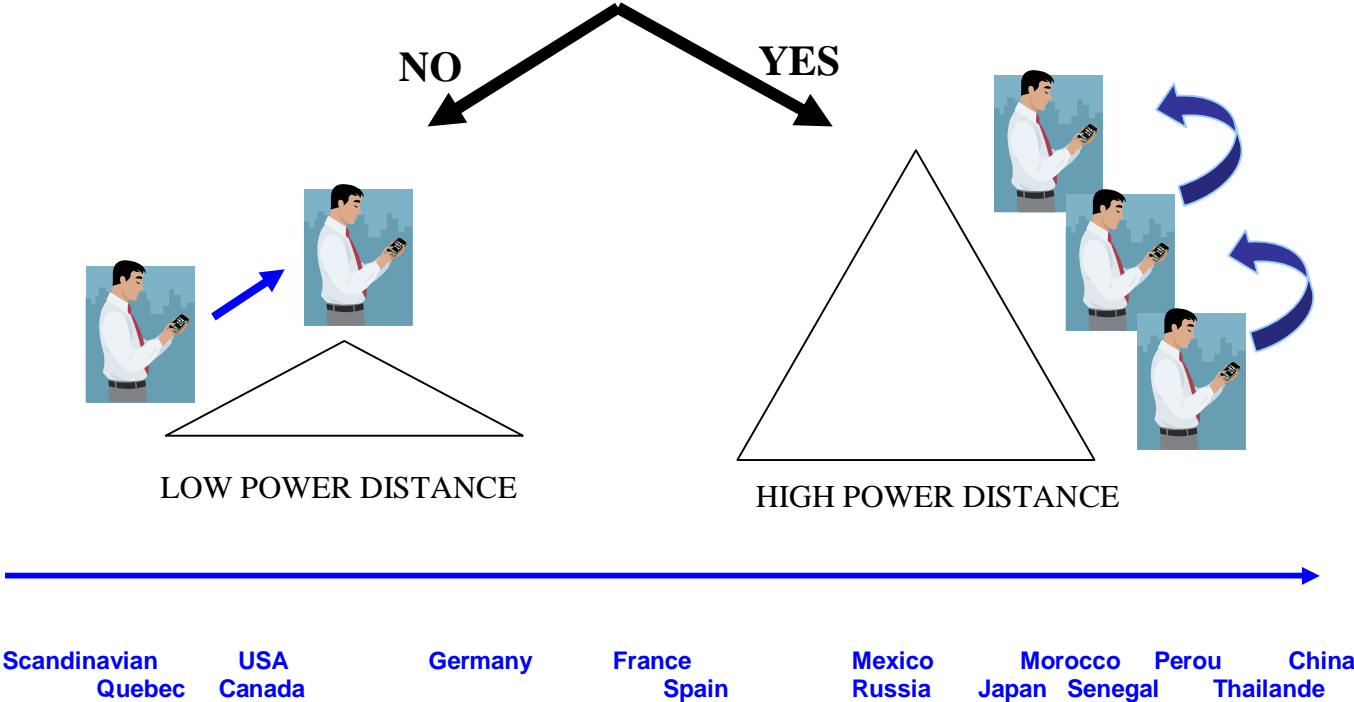
We note in the chart above that Arab countries are willing to accept a high power distance and then easily incorporate the existence of levels of social groups. Inequality in society is seen

through the existence of social classes. Moreover, citizens don't have an equal access to education and its benefits for instance (Bernard, 1994).

Researchers found that in most societies, social class, level of education and occupation are closely linked (Hofstede, 1980). These three factors, cited as sources of mental programming, are interdependent. Hofstede shows that in countries with high HDI, this applies to all categories of jobs, whatever their status.

In the context of countries with high power distance, superiors and subordinates themselves are unequal by nature in a system based on existential inequality (Bernard, 1994). The relationship between subordinates and superiors is often loaded with emotions.

**Is Power distance seen as natural?**



Source: Adapted from Dupuis (2005)

### 3.5. Comparison

Based on what we have presented above on Hofstede's cultural approach, I had the idea to divide in 2 columns countries that are culturally closer to Morocco and countries that are very far. The table below gives us some interesting information:

**Cultural comparison between Morocco and others countries**

<b>Hofstede's cultural dimension</b>	<b>Closer countries</b>	<b>More distant countries</b>
<b>Hierarchical distance</b>	<b>Senegal China Peru Japan</b>	<b>France Canada Quebec USA</b>
<b>Uncertainty avoidance</b>	<b>Senegal Peru Japan France</b>	<b>Scandinavian countries Canada USA</b>
<b>Masculinity</b>	<b>Senegal Peru Russia Japan China</b>	<b>Scandinavian countries Quebec Canada France USA</b>
<b>Individualism/collectivism</b>	<b>Senegal Peru Thailand Japan Mexico</b>	<b>Scandinavian countries Canada USA France</b>
<b>Relation to time</b>	<b>Senegal China Thailand Spain</b>	<b>Germany USA Scandinavian countries Canada</b>
<b>Ambiguity communication</b>	<b>Senegal China Peru Thailand</b>	<b>USA Canada Quebec Scandinavian countries</b>

On the other hand, the main destinations of Moroccan students who want to study abroad are the countries below (50,000 are studying abroad):

**France : Total of students: 30.000 – Each year 9800 go to France**

**Germany : Total of students: 8.400 – Each year 500 go to Germany**

**Canada (Québec) : Total of students: 2.500 – Each year 200 go to Canada**

**USA : Total of students: 1.000 – Each year 120 go to USA**

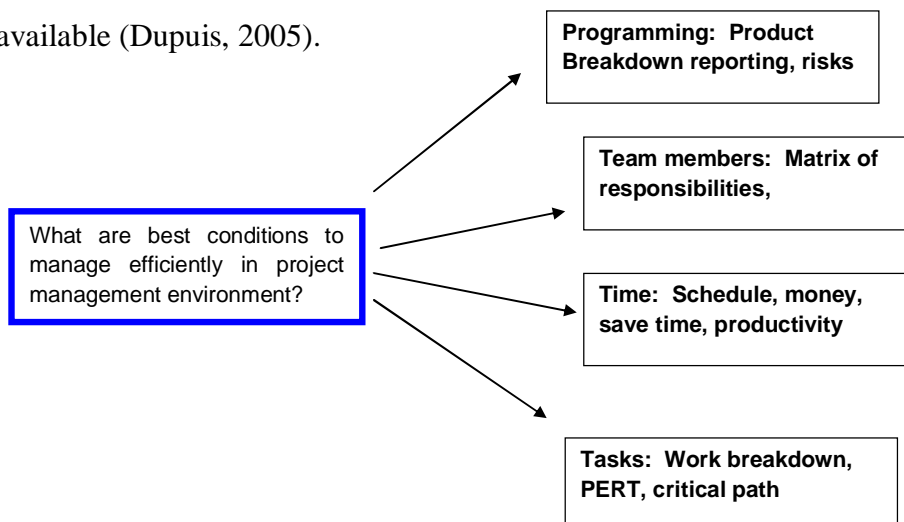
Sources: Moroccan Ministry of Education (2009)

According to Hofstede's study, it's clear that the countries that are culturally very far from Morocco are France, USA, Canada and Quebec, where more than 75% of Moroccan students and immigrants go to study or work.

#### 4. Management in Morocco

Moroccan companies cannot be managed without understanding hierarchy in the Moroccan sense. In both large structured companies and small companies, age and rank are an important aspect of "performance" and "efficiency". Basically, signs of submission and good behaviour help to keep harmony within the group. Paradoxically, participation and consultation in the Islamic society are not linked directly to ownership or hierarchical position, but rather to the inalienable right given to each member of a social group. In other words, authority is not justified or legitimized by the idea of ownership or by hierarchical position, but rather a continual negotiations. known as the "Shura", which means "consultancy" (Ibn Khaldoun, 1373). However, in Islamic law and jurisprudence, a leader has to consult but is not compelled to build consensus

The oral tradition that characterizes the Islamic society and the predominance of oral communications and direct reports give birth to a very informal communication and decision system that bypasses official channels of decision and defines new power relationships between individuals within an organization. It is a relationship that is not transitive (Crozier, 1977). The chart below shows an example where conditions to manage efficiently are not always available (Dupuis, 2005).



#### **4.1. SGS-Thomson case in Morocco**

In his book *Culture and Globalization*, D'Iribarne (1998) presents the particular case of SGS-Thomson that has implemented one of its factories in Morocco. Surprised by the excellent performance of the plant, the company conducted a study to elucidate the conditions of this success under its outstanding Performance.

The key element that emerges from this study is the introduction of TQM (Total Quality Management) assigned to all plant components. Viewed by experts as antithetical to the Moroccan mindset, TQM appears to be rather a booming success

TQM is primarily a new work philosophy. It relies on the establishment of common values in the combined enterprise under the term "corporate culture". Individuals are involved in the work because they feel involved in the company. We went from a system of police and "policing" to a world of learning, mingling communication, teaching, sharing, respect, trust, equality and responsibility. However, the author stresses that TQM did not work by its formal aspect. Conditions for success lie in reconciling the values of TQM with the precepts of Islam (D'Iribarne, 1998). It is this identification with the sacred that leads Moroccan employees to experience TQM as something normal, cultural and religious. But most important was the role of the General Manager who was closely linked to what a good leader must be in regard to Moroccan standards (D'Iribarne, 1998).

#### **5. The Case of Chinese returnees**

In their recent research, Alon and Zhang (2009) have studied a group of Chinese returnees and brought into light some important cultural aspects among others. They have stated that a common challenge lies in the different mindsets and approaches towards work adopted by returnees. These different approaches might be sources of friction with co-workers.

Another difficulty that Chinese returnees might face is the straightforward style of leadership and management they apply. According to Xin and Pilluta (2002), several returnees admitted that they sometimes get impatient with co-workers who speak in a roundabout way. Gross and Connor (2007) argued that Chinese returnees prefer people to say what they mean, rather than begin a conversation with preambles such as “I may not understand the issue very well, but I will humbly try to give you my perspective.” (Gross & Connor, 2007) Chinese returnees feel sometimes frustrated as their co-workers want to avoid any situation in which there is an angry disagreement. Chinese returnees often find such talk needless and frustrating (Xin & Pilluta, 2002).

At the end of this study, we will present a quick overview, according to scholars and authors, on what Chinese returnees have done to overcome such obstacles and then we could compare with what Moroccan returnees have set up to resolve challenges they faced. But first, let’s see what our congregated data have shown.

## **6. Definition of variable**

The validation of the hypothesis that managers who went abroad face the same difficulties will be done by analysing 4 variables:

Understanding: It measures the degree to which managers feel that their teams understand western management concepts. The assumption is that the understanding of the managerial concepts is weak.

Communication: This variable measures to what extent managers are close to their team, specifically with older employees. The assumption is that communication between the manager and the team members is problematic, especially with older employees.

The authority of the manager on his team: This variable measures to what extent managers are allowed to select new candidates without hierarchy interference. The assumption is that the

hierarchy interferes directly in the recruitment process but also in the daily management processes.

The autonomy and flexibility of the manager in the management of his or her team: This is about whether the manager has enough authority to lead his team as he wishes without interference from hierarchy. The assumption is that the manager has no sufficient autonomy to direct his team as he wants.

### **6.1. Collection of data**

Data is collected simultaneously through self-administered questionnaires (Le Francois, 1992) and interviews to explain to managers what they may not understand.

Easy to use and practical thanks to its neutrality, the questionnaire allows for wide, rapid, and inexpensive dissemination. The questionnaire allows reaching managers in other cities that would otherwise be inaccessible. The anonymous questionnaires help to obtain some confidential information and can be administered in multiple formats (paper, electronic). One of the major disadvantages of self-administered questionnaire is the risk to get a low response rate (Fenneteau, 2002)

Responses are divided according to Likert methodology: from "Strongly agree" (choose "1" in the Likert scale) to "Strongly disagree" (choice "5").

### **6.2. Responses to questionnaires**

After getting 80 responses from managers coming from a variety of industries (public works, chemical production, public administration, packaging, etc.), we compiled all the data using SPSS software. Here are the most important results:

Authority	You have encountered difficulties in performing tasks	66.7%
Understanding	Your team includes easy management methods that you want to use	56.7%
Authority	You get to apply management methods learned during your training	23.3%
Communication	You found it difficult to communicate with your team	70%
Autonomy and flexibility	You manage your team without the intervention of the higher hierarchy	50%

We could draw from these first results that managers really suffer from bad communication with their teams. Moreover, managers are not able to apply what they have learned abroad.

**The first paradox that emerges is that teams seem to understand western managerial concepts but they don't want to apply them.**

We tried to go deeper into our research. We were wondering if managers suffer from lack of respect or trust. These two dimensions might explain why employees actually don't want to follow instructions. Here is what managers responded:

Do your employees show you respect?

Strongly agree	53.3%
Agree	30%
Not agree, not disagree	16.7%
Disagree	0%
Strongly disagree	0%
Total	100%

According to the answers and unquestionably, managers don't suffer from lack of respect.

The second question we asked managers was if they feel trust from their teams.

They said the following:

Strongly agree	60%
Agree	40%
Not agree, not disagree	0%
Disagree	0%
Strongly disagree	0%

According to the answers, results are unequivocal. **A second paradox emerges here too.**

**Teams trust and respect their managers but at the same time they don't want to apply what managers want them to do.**

As we received responses from a variety of industries, we tried to see if there is any correlation between managers' obstacles and the nature of their business.

To remain consistent, first we created two categories of industries. One is characterized by a low level of employees' education. The second one is marked by a high skilled labour. For instance, textile industry is largely dominated by low level education. We received 32 responses from this type of industries (textile, craft, and food), and the rest is essentially consulting management firms, chemical plants, business schools, universities and design offices. We applied both the "Bivariate Correlation" statistical method and the "Anova One way" that are available on SPSS. The first method informs us if a correlation between 2 variables exists. The second method shows to which level variables are related. For instance, I tried to know the impact of team size on managers' difficulties. Here are results:

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Statistical method</b>	<b>Results</b>
Managers' difficulties / Industry	Bivariate correlation	Coefficient: 0.314 Risk error : 0.015
Managers' difficulties / Skilled labour	Anova one way	Coefficient: 0.862 Risk error : 0.1
Managers' difficulties / Team size	Bivariate correlation	Coefficient: 0.047 Risk error : 0.04
Managers' difficulties / Firm size	Anova one way	Coefficient: 0.072 Risk error : 0.392
Managers' difficulties / Years of experience	Anova one way	Coefficient: -0.143 Risk error : 0.05

In conclusion, research has shown that managers' difficulties are first strongly related to level of labour qualification. Secondly, team size and firm size seem not to have either negative or positive impact. Years of experience of managers don't have any kind of impact on their obstacles to manage employees.

The second main step in this study is to look for the solutions managers have applied to fix problems and difficulties. We tried to find for each set of solutions the one that has really improved organisation's performance. Based on the nature of difficulties that managers face (communication, understanding, etc.), I came up with questions related to difficulties. On the other hand, we measured performance using 2 main variables. The first one is called "Global performance". It shows whether managers feel that by adapting the way they deal with their teams, they improved teams' performances. The second one is called "Tools performance". It shows whether employees improved their productivity by using classic management tools (balance scorecard, reporting, productivity, etc.). Below are the results:

QUESTIONS	REPOSSES
You simplify communication with your team	Yes : 91.7%
Do you think that this adjustment was made in terms of the language you use?	Yes: 83.3%
You try to get closer to you team	Yes: 66.7%
You try to spend more time with your team	Yes: 67%
You try to adapt your management approach to your team	Yes: 39%
You use religious reference to improve team performance	Yes: 18%
The youngest members of your team are more willing to apply western managerial concepts?	Yes: 80%

First of all, we found **here the third paradox, which is the fact that even though Morocco is a deeply religious country and people are strong religious practitioners, it seems that using religious references to make people more willing and more receptive to work better and improve productivity has no impact.** Islam gives equal value to labour and prayer. Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) tells us that working and doing your prayer are equivalents (Dominique, 1996).

Once managers have adapted their management style, it will be interesting to see if performance has really improved. The table below shows the results (each question included many other questions but has been validated over 3 dimensions that were tested with the Cronbach alpha > 0,7):

Questions	Reponses
1- Do you think that you have improved team performance by adapting your management style?	Yes : 63.3%
2- Do you think that your teams apply western management	Yes: 81.7%

concepts easily?	
3- Team members use modern management tools to improve their productivity?	Yes: 37%

**Based on what I have found, I can say that managers who have seen performance improve have adapted their communication, got closer to their teams, shared more time with employees and, finally, found fewer obstacles with young employees. Showing generosity and being close to employees seem to be a key factor of success and might be the two pillars of what Moroccan employees see as the “Good boss”.**

**Basically, we would like to say here that probably the biggest paradox we came across was although Morocco is well known as a high power distance country according to Hofstede (1980), this study seems to demonstrate that managers have actually adopted low power distance style to overcome obstacles.**

These results show the limitation of the Hofstede cultural approach. Instead, it brings into light the D’Iribarne (1998) and Dupuis (2008) cultural theory and differentiation.

Research has also shown that modern management tools don’t guarantee at all performance improvement. In fact, better communication and better consideration must go along with modern concepts, otherwise managers will lose time to get things done.

### **7. Moroccan and Chinese returnees: Two perspectives**

Manu authors have shown that adaptation to a local environment is the key factor of success for returnees (Alon, 2004; Gross & Connor, 2007; Xin & Pilluta, 2002; Wang, 2008). This adjustment lies on the manager returnees’ capacities to tune up their mindset to what they have left. Below is a comparison between what Moroccan returnees and Chinese returnees have done to succeed in their professional environment

Moroccan returnees	Chinese returnees (According to authors)
Adjusting language	Readjusting to some local expressions (Gross & Connor, 2007)
Adjusting Communication style	Building trust (more important than profitability) (Alon, 2004)
Having more shared time	Strong social network (Wang, 2008)
Religious references don't help	No mention of religious aspects
Reducing hierarchical distance	Keeping hierarchical distance but using it wisely (Alon, 2004)
Hiring young employees	Working with other returnees (Wang, 2008)
Staying close to team members	Showing modesty and social awareness (Alon, 2004)

We can draw from the previous table that Moroccan and Chinese returnees have both adopted their language in terms of relearning local expressions and using understandable words. However, while Moroccan returnees don't need to build trust, Chinese returnees should recreate strong and sustainable confidence. Reducing power distance is one of the key factor of success in the Morocco case whereas Chinese returnees may have to keep wider power distance. Finally, showing social awareness, staying close to subordinates and keeping strong ties are probably the bone structure of the strategy that returnees, both Moroccan and Chinese, should apply. Does it mean that a successful comeback lies on social capacities more than your origin? Is there any general framework that returnees might have to incorporate no matter where they come from in order to make their return a success instead of a failure?. Certainly, we need more research and data to answer to this question but a tide is emerging and further research might confirm or invalidate this assumption.

## **Discussion and limitation**

One research cannot alone cover an entire field of research. How to avoid the paralysis induced by a look too analytical? As many authors have argued, statistical correlation does not necessarily mean causation. Moreover, the sample should be wider for this work to be legitimate and more trenchant. The potential bias due to the methodology used for data collection might limit the scale of results. An inside look done by a Moroccan in Morocco may be different from an outside point of view. Finally, this research was conducted within the central region of Morocco. However, the country was colonized by France in the centre, by Spain in the North and in the South. Results found here could be mitigated if the data come from another region that has been influenced by a different culture. Finally, performance is a multifactor dimension. Measuring performance with only 3 dimensions might reduce the scope although Performance variable have been validated by a the Cronbach alpha

## **Conclusion**

Cultural differences are a determining factor in organizational performance as many authors have stated. The relationship and communication style are essential in the quest for performance. Adaptation to local traditions should go with showing esteem to people. It is not enough to train people, managers must "talk" to their subordinates but subordinates also need to "talk" to their managers, which means that translation of concepts according to local linguistic universes (intelligible speech) and lowering power distance are the two key factors of success when managing people with unusual management styles. Referencing religious concepts in a country with a strong religious culture does not guarantee understanding or performance improvement.

The key to improving performance seems to be "restoring the self-esteem of individuals". Finally, it seems that cultural difficulties tend to multiply in poorly structured organisations.

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