

Public Diplomacy and Nation Brand

A Roadmap for Morocco

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A dissertation presented to the Faculty of Arts in the University of Malta for the degree of

Master in Contemporary Diplomacy

June 2012

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work.

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June 2012, Abu Dhabi, U.A.E

Dedication

To my father, for his inspiration to greater heights

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis supervisor Ambassador Kishan Rana for having accepted to supervise this research and for his guidance and insights.

My thanks go also to Mr. Patrick Borg for his outstanding support and help throughout this Master.

Finally, I wish to express my deep gratitude to DiploFoudation for having given me the chance to expand my horizon with this Master, and to its entire staff for their kindness and care.

Abstract

In a time where interaction with citizens is the key to diplomatic success, Morocco still lags behind other small states and does not yet pursue efficient strategies of public diplomacy and nation brand. Opportunities are missed out and the image of the country is not well promoted.

This paper explores how public diplomacy can help the North African Kingdom to advance its national interests and achieve its foreign policy goals. By targeting foreign publics and interacting directly with them either physically or virtually, Morocco could influence their attitudes, leading them to influence their governments' decisions, hence create a more favourable climate for advancing Morocco's national interests. The process should start at home by enhancing the sense of patriotism among domestic constituency, then by establishment of a Department of public diplomacy made up of seasoned and well-trained diplomats.

Branding the country for tourism, investment or even for living is economically rewarding and will help to correct negative stereotypes and tell the world the true story of Morocco. It is important to establish a Morocco Brand Board where all segments of society will be represented, sharing the same vision and aggressively involved in promoting an attractive image of the country.

List of Abbreviations

EU	European Union
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NB	Nation Brand
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NSAs	Non State-Actors
PAO	Public Affairs Officer
PD	Public Diplomacy
PDO	Public Diplomacy Officer

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BACKGROUND

Morocco at a glance

Morocco is small state of a population of 32.3 million (2011 est.). This North African nation is predominantly Sunni Muslim with very small Jewish and Christian communities. It is a mixture of Arab, Islamic, Berber, Jewish, African and European influences. The country suffers high rates of poverty, unemployment and illiteracy. The major resources of the economy are agriculture, phosphate, tourism and fishing industry. Diaspora is estimated at about 4 millions, two thirds of it is in Europe, and the rest is spread throughout the Americas, Australia, Africa and countries of the Arab World.

Morocco is part of the Maghreb region (Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Mauritania) and part of Africa, but is not acting in any of their unions because of divisions on the issue of the “Western Sahara”.

The kingdom is a monarchy and the King Mohamed VI is a descendant of the prophet and “commander of the faithful” which make him responsible for protecting all faiths, and guaranteeing stability of the country. This King who ascended to the throne in 1999 is a liberal-minded ruler, who has tried to reconcile the regime with the population through many substantial reforms, and tried always to be close to the citizens’ concerns. In 2007, he launched the strategy of the National Initiative for Human Development, a billion social development plan designed to make sure the economic growth reach the needy people.

Foreign Policy

Morocco's foreign policy is based on maintaining friendly relations with all countries of the world and supporting peaceful solutions to conflicts through the United Nations and other international bodies. A former French and Spanish colony, Morocco still maintains strong ties with these countries through investments, immigration, tourism and cultural exchanges. It is considered as a privileged partner of the E.U, and is a strong ally of the U.S.

The main priority of Morocco's foreign policy is an area of land at the Southwest of Morocco, referred to by U.N as "Western Sahara"; it is claimed by Morocco on the ground of historical ties between the Sahrawi tribes and the old Moroccan sultans. At the same time, it is contested by an independence-seeking group called Polisario which is supported by Algeria. The disputed area is rich in fish and phosphate, and believed to have oil resources. In 1884, the territory fell under Spanish rule, until 1975 date of its decolonization. Then it turned into a battlefield between Morocco and Polisario from 1975 to 1991, the ceasefire was brokered by the U.N. The Polisario is now taking refuge in Algerian camps with more than 100,000 refugees, and is establishing itself as the sole representative of the Sahrawi people. (BBC, 2011). In 2007, the King Mohamed VI submitted to the U.N the autonomy plan which will grant "Western Sahara" extensive autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty. This plan is praised by Spain, France, the U.K, the U.S, the E.U and the U.N, but it has not yet been approved by the Polisario. In line with the autonomy proposal, Morocco is pursuing policies of advanced regionalization and decentralization for all regions of Morocco, in the hopes of offering an alternative to the independence request advanced by the Polisario.

The International Crisis Group (2007) argues that "Based on their own calculations, they (parties to the conflict) have deemed the stalemate bearable", and that for Morocco, an unfavourable settlement would mean putting to end the monarchical regime's legitimacy as a rallying point for different cultural components; for POLISARIO, an unfavourable settlement

would mean that more than three decades of resistance were wasted for nothing; for Algeria, it would mean victory of its rival Morocco and giving up on the principle of self-determination of peoples which it has defended for decades.

Morocco and Algeria are the biggest countries in North Africa and are neighbors, their populations share strong personal and cultural ties, but governments seem to be rivals, each one developing its weaponry and looking forward to taking leadership in the region. This issue is crucial to Morocco's foreign policy and has exhausted financial and human resources of the country.

Diplomatic practices

In Morocco, diplomacy has for so long been a monopoly of those who belonged to the privileged groups, without necessarily having the relevant education, skills or experience of a diplomat. They have always been living in their ivory tower, away from the concerns of the ordinary people, to whom they were never accountable. Yet, they allowed themselves to speak on behalf of the nation.

Moroccans still remember how the late King Hassan II was practicing a different PD in a successful way and had put Morocco on the map thanks to his charismatic personality. He had managed to forge personal relationships with some of the superpower leaders and could tackle international affairs intelligibly. He was open to the West, and managed to handle the issue of "Western Sahara" carefully at a critical time when self-determination was the motto among the newly independent developing countries. King Hassan II gained support of the major powers such as the U.S, France, Spain and the former Soviet Union in terms of his handling of the "Western Sahara" issue. He also acted as an intermediary in Middle East issues and tried to come up with solutions to the Palestinian-Israeli issue. In a nutshell, the late King gave some visibility to Morocco in the world.

But that was a very narrow practice, and is not sustainable as it ceased with the death of the King. Actually, since the succession of his son King Mohamed VI to power in 1999, he chose to place more emphasis on domestic issues, and there has been a salient retreat of Morocco from the international scene.

Sport used to be a strong dimension of PD for Morocco, as the country had a strong foot-ball team and world champions in tracks and fields who raised the Moroccan flag on many occasions. Some advance that the then athletes had a strong sense of patriotism and were driven by their love for their country unlike the current generations!

Diplomatic crisis and exclusion of citizens

The way the thorny issue of “Western Sahara” is dealt with by the MFA has in the last years started to irritate the Moroccan tax-payers given the large financial resources it exhausts, and given the noticeable failures of Moroccan diplomacy to handle diplomatic crises, for example crises with Spain under the former Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar.

On the other hand, whenever a bad incident takes place in Morocco, the government does not act proactively to give the accurate story to the media, but leaves the door open for world media to tell their own version of the story which is usually biased and unbalanced, and ends up tarnishing the image of the country. A telling example is of the Sahrawi separatist female Aminatou Haidar¹ who was portrayed by world media as a victim persecuted by the Moroccan regime and gained sympathy of human rights organizations.

In addition to such failures abroad, there are failures inside the country, as the citizens have always been excluded from the management of their country’s foreign policy. Neither the

¹ She is a leading activist for the independence of “Western Sahara”. When she arrived in Morocco and had to fill out an immigration form, she put Western Sahara as her nationality while she was holding and using a Moroccan passport, so Moroccan authorities refused to admit her and deported her to Canary Islands since she has a Spanish residence permit. She went on hunger strike and gained huge support from NGOs and international public figures, then the U.S. and E.U exerted pressure on Moroccan authorities and made them admit her.

domestic audience nor the Diaspora were consulted or engaged in the diplomatic efforts of the government in trying to accomplish territorial integrity of Morocco, except through some timid actions conducted by some Moroccan associations in Europe. The same thing happened when Moroccan diplomats were working behind the scene to study the proposal of joining the Gulf Cooperation Council, and Moroccan citizens heard about it from the media only. Most of the time, citizens are not so important in the diplomatic efforts and are called into action only after a diplomatic crisis has erupted, when the damage has already happened.

Current situation of PD in Morocco

It is worthy to note that the term PD is not used in the official literature of Moroccan government, except in very limited cases where some officials talk about “Parallel Diplomacy” (in Arabic), which is to a certain extent close to PD.

The MFA of Morocco has a Department called Department of PD and Non State-Actors. According to the website of the MFA, the functions of this Department are as follows:

- Following up on local and international news, and disseminating reports on those news to all departments of the MFA;
- Informing Moroccan diplomatic and consular missions of the situation at home;
- Accreditation of press correspondents and foreign media agencies in Morocco; management of the archives; building up dossiers of written, audio and visual references related to issues that might help sections of the MFA at home and the diplomatic and consular services in undertaking their relevant media roles in Morocco;
- Fostering interaction between civil society actors and think-tanks;
- Managing, following up on and updating the electronic website of the MFA and making sure to improve the image of Morocco and develop the diplomatic work accordingly;

- Assuming the role of spokesperson for the MFA.

Such functions are good for the MFA, but this is not PD as understood and conducted by the rest of the world. There is no mention whatever of any action of communication or engagement with foreign audiences. This leaves Morocco way behind many developing states pursuing PD tirelessly such as Kenya.

I had emailed the Director of Public Diplomacy and Non State-Actors at the MFA with seven questions pertinent to the Department duties, and he answered with three pages explaining to me what they do in detail. Honestly, I was impressed to see that he did care and responded to an email from an “ordinary Moroccan citizen”. In fact, this is indicative of the positive changes affecting the whole Arab world in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, leading to a change in the mentalities, this is also due to the power that internet has offered to people, allowing them to navigate in a borderless world, and to enter into offices (virtually) without asking for an appointment. That being said, I have to admit that the answers he sent me were not so much different from the duties published on the website and do not reflect PD as pursued by most countries of the world.

Moroccan diplomats pursue PD with foreign audiences on very limited occasions through some sporadic activities such as educational exchange programs (between Morocco and U.S. or between Morocco and some African countries), some friendship associations (with US, Spain, Netherlands, Algeria...etc); but it never amounted to a real process of PD.

As a result, sentiments of dismay and frustration accumulated among citizens for the failure of Moroccan diplomacy to defend the national interests, and promote the image of the country abroad.

Morocco and the Arab Spring

After the fallout of some Arab regimes as part of the Arab Spring, many Arab countries have taken unprecedented measures to implement some democratic measures in order to curb the amounting anger and frustration of their citizens. Morocco which experienced some sort of turmoil in that time but without having a revolution, has managed to contain the situation and the King Mohamed VI made some amendments to the constitution by transferring some of his powers to the democratically elected Prime Minister Abdelilah Benkirane who was perceived by the majority of citizens as a leader who is capable of ushering Morocco into a new era of democratization and modernization.

Moroccans had voted on July 1, 2011 on a new constitution, which consisted of a series of reforms. As far as this research is concerned, we can mention the following reforms (Wikipedia, 2012):

- Recognition of all the linguistic components of Morocco through establishment of the Amazigh language as an official language along with Arabic (Amazigh people make about 50% of the population), and protection of Hassaniya, a language spoken in the Sahrawi Provinces.
- Appointment of Ambassadors by the Prime Minister (instead of the King).
- Freedom of thoughts and opinions.

Although those reforms did not meet ambitions of many liberal-minded citizens, they were viewed by the majority as a strategy to maintain stability and avoid a bloody scenario like it happened in other Arab countries.

Opportunities for Morocco

In today's anarchic international environment, and with the ongoing revolution in ICT, changes are happening so fast and spare no country, opening the door for more involvement of citizens. The political scene in Morocco is being democratized and citizens pressurize for accountability and better governance. Media is also being reformed and citizens are engaged positively in dialogue with the government. Such factors make Morocco mature enough to espouse a successful public diplomacy to strengthen its economic performance and brand its image.

Morocco started focusing in the last years on good governance for tackling domestic issues, knowing that bad governance is the root cause of all dysfunctions in society. But good governance should be applied to foreign affairs as well, and should entail participation of the entire society in governance of foreign affairs within a system of legitimacy, accountability, openness and competence.

Morocco has at its disposal a dynamic youth ready to help in defending the national interests in very innovative ways. They just need to be given the opportunity and guidance. The Moroccan Diaspora is interesting in terms of numbers (~ 4 millions) and they seem to preserve their Moroccan identity and culture, a proof of dedication and love of the home country while adopting with no difficulty the culture and traditions of the countries of settlement, hence developing some sort of biculturalism. Their use of the internet has increased significantly in the last years, either for communicating with families back in Morocco or for communicating between themselves through online platforms such as Facebook. They use these tools to raise political issues like "Western Sahara" conflict, the *Amazigh* identity or reforms of the regime. It is this type of citizens, established both at home and abroad, that can inject a new blood in diplomatic practices, and there will not even be a need to hire a consulting agency to establish a PD for Morocco. In fact, the game of PD is not

so much complicated and all it entails is defining roles and having the right person in the right place.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study seeks to achieve the following:

- To study the shift in diplomatic practices worldwide and the fast growing importance of public diplomacy for large and small states alike.
- To shed light on the positive changes occurring in Morocco in the aftermath of the Arab Spring.
- To explain the advantages of public diplomacy for Morocco
- To propose an action plan for establishing public diplomacy and nation brand.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A literature review of the topic of PD in Morocco has shown that the topic is not covered by researchers, and the term is quasi inexistent in Moroccan official discourse, making it hard to find something to build on. However, I relied on my own understanding and observation of the situation in Morocco, being a Moroccan citizen myself; and I looked at PD in large states and small states alike, trying to derive lessons and draw conclusions, and explain how Morocco can set up its own PD.

The research follows a descriptive and analytical approach of the climate prevailing in Morocco, and relies mostly on assessed internet sources such as electronic books, journals, magazines, newspapers and blogs. Secondary sources are published materials related to the concept and practices of public diplomacy.

The research uses oral interviews to collect data, which is compiled, analyzed and processed. Interviewees are mostly foreign citizens who know about Morocco for having lived there or visited the country or just heard about it.

Purpose of the Study

This study was written with an honest intention of a patriotic Moroccan citizen who is looking forward to seeing his country able to handle its diplomatic interests more efficiently and project a positive image to the world.

The study examines how PD and nation brand can in the long run generate further development for the country by solving issues related to territorial integrity and promoting the image of the country abroad. It argues that Morocco can take advantage of the ongoing constitutional reforms to launch a PD strategy, and of its investments in infrastructures and tourism to establish a Brand Morocco Board.

Justification of the Study

This study can serve as a guide for the Moroccan government and as an eye opener on what comprehensive strategies of PD and nation brand can offer once all stakeholders stick together. It can also stimulate debate and discussions among Moroccan elites, and hopefully be a kick-start for further researches on the much ignored field of PD in the Arab world in general and Morocco in particular.

On the other hand, this study comes in response to the general outcry among Moroccan population over the way that the government handles diplomatic affairs, and over which they have different views.

Limitations of the Study

This study faced some constraints due to difficulty of meeting Moroccan diplomats in person for interview purposes since the researcher is living outside of Morocco. Another factor is the lack of a successful experience of PD in other Arab countries which led the research to adopt a creative strategy.

Chapter 1: Concept of Public Diplomacy for Morocco

1.1. Concept of PD

1.1.1. Definition of PD

Trying to find a single agreed-upon definition of public diplomacy maybe a hard task as the concept is evolving constantly, but is not this the very essence of PD which is by nature innovative and proactive?

The scholar Ann Lane (2006) concluded at a conference that “public diplomacy has entered the lexicon of twenty first century diplomacy without clear definition of what it is or how the tools it offers might be used”. The term has always been tricky that “many scholars and professionals have confused public diplomacy with propaganda, public relations, international public relations, psychological warfare, and public affairs” (Gilboa, 2008, p. 56). The U.S Center on Public Diplomacy (2012) notes that the term PD was coined in the mid-1960s by former U.S. diplomat Edmund Gullion to distance overseas governmental actions from the pejorative term propaganda. It was viewed then as the transparent channels of communication, by which a country communicates with publics in other foreign countries in order to inform and influence public opinion overseas, and thus promote its national interests and advance greater receptivity to its policies among foreign publics. In those days, PD was predominantly practiced by the U.S. through the U.S. Information Agency, which was seeking to win hearts and minds of foreign publics and therefore win their long term support for its foreign policies. Jan Melissen (2006) indicates that public diplomacy involves wining

others to your side and influencing their attitudes, and that those others can be multipliers of opinions or informed ordinary citizens.

A broad definition is given by the scholar Schneider (2004) who suggests that PD “basically comprises all a nation does to explain itself to the world”. I find this definition very interesting, as it is pervasive and participatory, which means that PD is not confined to a certain activity on one hand, and that all citizens can be involved in it on the other hand.

Today, PD has evolved and is gradually taking over from the traditional diplomacy, pushing governments to remain in the background while non state-actors such as NGOs, businessmen, think-tanks...etc engage in international activities for the good of their own country. This new PD has expanded to cover different aspects of life, becoming an imperative of diplomacy, if not the very diplomacy. Dr. Kiehl (2010), Editor of the journal *American Diplomacy* reflected that idea when he said: “Today, PD is often considered the natural right of NGOs, the military, development specialists, academics, foundations, citizen groups and individual citizens”.

PD is no longer the exclusive preserve of large states like U.S, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan...etc or the emerging powers like China, India, South Africa, Brazil...etc but even small states like Norway, Qatar, Czech Republic, Kenya, Maldives...etc have successfully started pursuing PD.

Many ministries of foreign affairs of large or small states ranging from the United States to Leinchestein, either democratic or authoritarian regimes such as Singapore or China, or even the poorest states such as Ethiopia, have shown a great interest in PD. (Melissen, 2007)

From my understanding of the different definitions put forward by different scholars, I can define PD as the process by which state and non-state actors of a sending country use their skills of persuasion and soft power of attraction to engage directly with foreign audiences in a

receiving country in order to spark an international exchange of people and ideas, leading to a positive change in the opinions and attitudes of those audiences, thus more receptivity of the sending country's foreign policies by the government of the receiving country.

After the tragedy of 11 September 2001, a new public diplomacy has seen light, it is more democratized than its predecessor, and it revolves essentially around the citizen who has to be reached physically or virtually in order to engage him in a two ways and transparent dialogue. It aims to develop a mutual understanding between peoples and win their hearts and minds.

According to this new PD, the MFA is relegated to a second status, content of coordination and supervision of its state and non state-actors activities of engagement and interaction with foreign audiences to ensure that they do not deviate from the main objectives that the MFA seeks to achieve.

To summarize, we can say that PD is the process by which the MFA ensure that state and NSAs engage in two ways dialogues with foreign publics in an attempt to win their hearts and minds and create a more favorable climate in which to promote national interests.

1.1.2 Dimensions of PD

Joseph Nye (2010) identifies three dimensions for PD: daily communication, strategic communication, and long term relationships.

Daily communication is the dimension by which public diplomats intervene timely to explain domestic and foreign policy decisions, or to deal with crises. Public diplomats have to tell their own version of the story to foreign publics and mass media in a proactive way to avoid dissemination of inaccurate or wrong stories. However, "our side of the story" must be credible and consistent with the national position.

Strategic communication is the process by which a message is reinforced over weeks, months and even years through different communication outlets. All outlets must repeat the same message regularly and reinforce it with relevant events to convey a consistent message.

The last dimension which is development of long term relationships is the essence of PD. Building long term relationships requires time, patience and perseverance. They are built through people to people exchanges, trainings, conferences, and access to media outlets.

Joseph Nye adds also what he terms indirect PD, cultures as conveyed by countries' brands, for example Hollywood has a huge impact on foreign publics and serves indirectly the U.S government efforts of PD. He states: "the brands and representatives of American companies often are more available to people around the world than government officials".

1.1.3 Difference between PD and traditional diplomacy

Traditional diplomats work primarily with their counterparts in the receiving country mostly on classified matters and inform the MFA of the progress of their actions. Public diplomats go beyond their official counterparts and target directly the citizens of that country, trying to explain to them their policies and convey an understanding of the country's domestic politics, society, and culture. PD professionals are facilitators who arrange meetings and dialogue between peoples of both sides by organizing different types of engaging activities: lectures, seminars, exchange programs...etc. Their ultimate goal is to reach an understanding and eventually influence the position of the other side. Traditional diplomats seek to maintain strong ties between both governments regardless of the understanding of the peoples. A public diplomacy professional has to reach a broad audience of foreign publics and should have strong skills for dealing with the media and ordinary citizens. (Rugh, 2009)

1.2 Relevance of PD to Morocco

Morocco has all reasons to pursue a PD policy. The main reason is its smallness, which means limited resources, missed opportunities, invisibility and inability to shape the international agenda. Small states would always find advantage in embracing PD, because it gives them the chance to exploit their full potential and to counterbalance their weaknesses. They need to be innovative and to appeal to soft power to project their country abroad.

According to Jan Melissen (2006), countries pursue PD for five main reasons and they all apply to Morocco:

a- To boost economy:

Morocco is a small state with very limited resources, and its economy consists essentially of agriculture, phosphate and tourism. But rainfalls are unreliable in that semi-arid climate, and the last decade was characterized by drought some times and floods other times; phosphate prices have been fluctuating on the international market and affected Morocco's economy, and tourism revenues have dropped after the financial crisis on one hand and the competition from other touristic destinations on the other hand.

Moreover, the Arab Spring of 2011 has opened the door for different segments of society to claim a betterment of their living standards. Thousands of unemployed graduates demonstrate to claim their rights in employment; inhabitants of remote villages are speaking up and asking for social inclusion and better services; government employees go on strikes for a raise in their salaries...etc. Therefore, Moroccan government comes under huge pressure. The only solution is to mobilize all available resources to boost its economic performance by attracting foreign investments and promoting tourism.

There is a political will in Morocco for boosting economy, and actions started about a decade ago with the ascension of King Mohamed VI to power in 1999, and his personal involvement

in changing the economic and social situation of Moroccan citizens. In 2005, he launched a project called National Initiative for Human Development which aims at alleviating poverty, fighting vulnerability and social exclusion. However, the socio-economic situation is still challenging for the government. In this context, PD is very essential as it can influence foreign governments through their domestic constituencies and persuade them to engage in economic partnerships with Morocco. For example, it can be instrumental in the activation of the Maghreb Union, which can generate economic exchange between Morocco and other countries of the Maghreb.

b-To support long-term aims in foreign policy:

Morocco has also long- term aims in foreign policy which are:

- To get full sovereignty on the Sahrawi Provinces in the hopes of success of the autonomy proposal for “Western Sahara”, supported by U.S. and France among many others.
- To boost its advanced partnership with the E.U and benefit from different types of European privileges.
- To be a strategic player in the Maghreb Union, and in Africa.
- To stretch its influence beyond Africa and Europe and build regional alliances, like with the GCC, Asia and Latin America.

Such long term aims can be achieved if Morocco sets up a smart and consistent policy of PD which will make foreign citizens start understanding Moroccan positions and become favourable to them.

It is worthwhile mentioning that the issue of full sovereignty on “Western Sahara” can be a hard sell for Morocco, so it is better for PD to opt for the wider objective of advanced regionalization and get support for it from foreign governments. By the way, Spain can be a

good interlocutor for regionalization as it is one of the most decentralized states in Europe. Catalonia, the Basque country and Galicia were designated as three provinces with “historic nationalities” and granted autonomy. (Wikipedia, 2012)

c- To enhance visibility: Morocco suffers a problem of visibility, and in lots of countries, Morocco is not well known and sometimes never heard of, some people think it is a backward country with no infrastructures. In the minds of foreigners who visited Morocco, they associate it with beaches, desert and mountains. But for many of those who never visited it and are living thousands of miles away, Morocco is part of Africa, which in their minds represents poverty, diseases, ignorance, and vulnerability. That is unfair for Morocco, and only PD can introduce the Kingdom to citizens of the world in more efficient ways through people to people exchanges.

d- To do away with historical stereotypes: Morocco was a former French and Spanish colony, and peoples of those countries still look down at the Moroccan citizens. And because of the bloody legacy between Morocco and Spain and which goes back to centuries, Spaniards even if they treat Moroccans with respect and diplomacy, still refer to them as Moors², a pejorative and emotionally charged term. The Spanish collective consciousness forged a negative image of Morocco, an image overshadowed by mistrust and misunderstanding which took hold since the fall of Granada in 1492 and the ensuing wars, such as Anoual battle of resistance of the Moroccan Rif region in 1921 and in which 14,000 Spanish perished.

“Moreover, the participation of Moroccan soldiers in the Spanish civil war (1936-1939) and the critical role they played for Franco’s victory, sealed forever the bad image of Moroccans in Spain”. (Bennis, 2012). All these wars have confirmed among Spaniards the image of Moroccans as “bloodthirsty savages”.

Concerning France, the French Algerian relationship is still characterized by hatred because of the French long occupation of Algeria and the war of resistance. Some French citizens told

me that the general population in France view Moroccans in the same way they view Algerians: violent and aggressive. They believe that since both of them are neighbours, they should be judged in the same way. Again, this is unfair for Moroccans, especially those living in France.

Such xenophobic attitude towards Moroccans have been passed on to the European future generations, and it became normal now to depict Moroccans in negative ways and refer to them as beggars, robbers or even terrorists.

e- To head off a crisis or negative perceptions abroad: In some countries, specifically the Gulf region, there are negative perceptions about Morocco which is unfairly reduced in the Moroccan women. And because a tiny number of Moroccan women went there for indecent purposes, citizens of the Gulf states formed negative perceptions about the Moroccan woman in general which is viewed as a “witch and a prostitute”. About two years ago, a crisis had erupted between Morocco and Kuwait when a Kuwaiti cartoon portrayed Moroccan women as witches, and only an official apology from Kuwait officials calmed down the tension. A similar situation occurred when the Gulf Cooperation Council invited Morocco to join them as a member. Women from the gulf had started blogging and expressing their refusal of the proposal because of “the influence that Moroccan women can have on their husbands if they can freely enter the GCC countries”. Such situations created some feelings of discomfort among the Moroccan community abroad. But no measures were taken to change this unfair and devastating stereotype.

Domestic audience would support any re-branding efforts, and since Morocco is relatively a young country, it will not be hard to change those negative perceptions that people developed over the last few decades.

Another factor that makes PD relevant to Morocco is the individual efforts of Moroccan citizens and which need to be organized under the umbrella of PD. There are many associations of Moroccans established in Europe, some of them are more important than others, but their actions are fragmented and not very efficient. In addition to the actual world, they act in the virtual one, and their use of the internet is so significant. They use it for preserving strong ties with the families back home, but also for engaging with each other through online platforms and to discuss different issues relevant to the regime policies. One of those famous internet portals is “Yabiladi” (My country in Arabic) and which has been used widely by Moroccan immigrants; they also use Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and many others. During the last years, the online newspaper Hesperess started gaining in popularity among Moroccan internet users both at home and abroad, and the number of visitors of its website keeps increasing, they do not only read but interact extensively with all published materials through comments. So it is not only their real initiatives that are fragmented through so many associations all over Europe, but even their virtual ones through a variety of online interactive platforms. The MFA is supposed to adopt those internet initiatives, and establish a specific social network for Moroccan Diaspora and guide their interactions towards the bigger goals of the MFA.

*Success in reaching an unfamiliar destination depends upon
listening to those who have travelled the path before you*

Chapter 2: Practices of Other Countries and Lessons to be learned

There are some good examples of PD over the world. Countries conduct many different dimensions of PD to the extent that sometimes it becomes hard to tell what PD is and what it is not, or to draw a fine line between propaganda and PD. I have chosen here the superpower state of U.S. which pursues PD for decades without reaching a full success, and small states: Qatar and Norway which both use a niche diplomacy of mediation and peace, in addition to two small states where PD is still in its infancy: Maldives and Kenya.

2.1. U.S.

There is no doubt that the U.S. has been the pioneer in PD for decades. American culture has invaded the houses of people who never left their native village in Morocco or in Thailand for example thanks to the American brands and the numerous programs of public diplomacy.

The U.S. was active in PD during the Cold War through the U.S. Information Agency, but when the cold war came to an end, PD activities decreased and the USIA integrated into the US Department of State in 1999. It was only after the 9/11 attacks that PD regained its momentum and the then President George. W. Bush decided that America should “tell its story” to the world.

In line with the military actions in Afghanistan and the invasion of Iraq, America was trying to sell to the world a seemingly “interesting story” of U.S. as a caring country, eager to achieve peace and happiness among peoples of the world. Huge amounts of money have since

then been allocated to American PD programs, for example in 2008, the budget of PD reached 1.6 billion U.S. Dollars (Armitage and Nye 2012). Remarkably, the veteran advertising executive Charlotte Beers who was appointed in 29 March 2001 as Under Secretary of State for Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy, gained in popularity only after the attacks and captured the attention of media and public and received additional resources, in the hopes that with her business marketing techniques she would enhance the image of U.S. abroad and change the negative perceptions of those who hate America (Tiedman, 2004).

The PD campaign targeted mainly the Muslim and Arab world where Anti-American sentiments were mounting and from where Al-Qaeda members came. Interest in Arabic culture and language increased and diplomats received more pertinent training. The campaign used print, electronic and satellite media to reach out to the Arab world and to show the common values that both Americans and Arabs share such as importance of family life and religious tolerance.

New satellite channels were launched to target Arabs, starting with the Arabic-language radio station 'Radio Sawa', followed by the Arabic TV channel Al-Hurra, they reflect American perspective and lifestyle, but attract a very limited audience and lack credibility.

U.S. machinery of PD has even secured itself a foothold in the EU, with broadcasting facilities in Brussels, helping to pass the message of the U.S. to the European citizens, and setting the stage for further cooperation between the U.S. and Europe.

Another dimension of American PD is Sport Diplomacy. Through sports exchange programs, U.S. seeks to promote understanding between Americans and people of the world in a field which has the advantage of bringing all peoples together regardless of race, color or ethnicity. The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' Sports United Division is the key player in this diplomacy. The U.S. Department of State reports that "Since 2003, Sports United has brought more than 900 athletes from 58 countries to the U.S. to participate in Sport Visitor

Programs. Since 2005, Sports United has sent over 200 U.S. athletes to 50 countries to participate in Sport Envoy Program” (U.S. Department of State, 2012).

U.S. which is an old friend of Morocco, has for so long helped in boosting economic opportunities in Morocco through various empowerment programs for the youth and gave some of them all the business expertise or even training courses in U.S. for the most distinguished candidates. U.S. programs of Assistance to Morocco reached about \$13 million in 2003. Other programs followed and proved to be successful. In an interview with the Moroccan television channel 2M in February 26, 2012, the U.S Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said: “the U.S. program Partnerships for a New Beginning, which is designed to help create a culture of entrepreneurship and small businesses in Muslim-majority countries, had seen one of its most successful groups of businessmen and businesswomen formed in Morocco” (The U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Information Programs, 2012).

Surprisingly, all these efforts did not pay off as much as they were expected to. Negative perceptions of U.S. in the Arab world still persist; they even got worse after the invasion of Iraq and the “crescent war of George. W. Bush” on terrorism, viewed by many Muslims around the world as a war on Islam.

According to Pew Research Center polls (Wolf and Rosen, 2004) which were conducted in 2002, 2003, 2004, perceptions of the U.S. held by most Muslims and Arabs remain distinctly unfavourable. Even citizens of long-standing allies like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Morocco held a predominantly unfavourable view of the U.S. People in the Islamic and Arab world have lost trust in U.S. They believe there is a discrepancy between the ideals and values that America promotes and its actions on the ground, like preaching freedom and invading Iraq, or calling on countries to observe human rights and abusing Muslim prisoners’ rights. Arabs

were expecting so much from the U.S after Obama made his highly applauded Speech in Cairo, believing he will make it up for the mistakes of his predecessor George W. Bush. But hope turned into frustration when they started seeing the same old American policies implemented on the ground. Furthermore, in the subconscious mind of American diplomats practitioners, the PD campaign in the Arab and Muslim world aims to “win the hearts and minds” of people, and winning suggests a competition (Zaharna, no date), where one wins and the other loses, and this goes against the win-win approach necessary for building mutual trust and beneficial relations.

However, U.S. did not give up. Today, it has developed new strategies and tried to get much closer to foreign audiences. Judith A. McHale, former Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (2009-2011) is reported to have said: “The only solution is to become a part of the conversations, to go out and engage with people wherever they may congregate in the real or virtual world” (cited in Comenetez, 2011). In fact, American diplomats nowadays use ICT wisely for interacting with the rest of the world. They blog, twitter, post videos and pictures on social networks in order to keep up with the new communication platforms that youth use and which keep developing rapidly, challenging the governments themselves. In 2011, U.S. established the Digital Outreach Team, a sort of digital diplomats who interact on the internet with the rest of the world.

If US is a superpower and can carry out a comprehensive PD to target all countries of the world at once, seeking to correct the prevailing misperceptions about U.S, the developing small states cannot afford such a luxury of allocating a huge amount of money to PD. Therefore, it is crucial for Moroccan government to decide which countries should be targeted by PD, and the actions that will be taken for each target country in tandem with corresponding costs, and the expected results in medium and long terms.

2.2. Qatar

Qatar, the tiny state in the Gulf, has become a role model of successful PD for small states. Since 1995, after the bloodless coup that allowed the new Emir to take power, Qatar has been playing all sides, and developing relationships with different countries without any restriction. It started by signing a treaty with the U.S. which until now keeps a heavy military presence within Qatar borders to guarantee the security of this small state in a region where it is surrounded by two large and ambitious states: Iran and Saudi Arabia. Then it started pursuing innovative avenues of PD through the launching of Al Jazeera Satellite TV.

Qatar projects itself as a peaceful country devoted to spreading peace over the world. It supports the good causes of other foreign countries and non-state actors, and pursues a foreign policy similar to Turkey “zero problems with neighbors” and as Alan Henrikson (2005, p.1) argues:

It is sometimes possible for a country to do very well by doing good. To support ‘good works’, to perform ‘good deeds, to use ‘good’ words, and to project ‘good’ images can pay off in terms of international prestige, and in even more practical expressions of others’ appreciation.

As part of its branding efforts, Qatar uses its wealth of oil wisely for humanitarian assistance, organization and hosting of international events, education, and broadcasting to the world through the famous TV channel Al-Jazeera.

In terms of humanitarian assistance, Qatar has been donating for so long to victims in countries, cities and villages, like the victims of Hurricane Katrina to whom it donated \$ 100 million, victims of Haiti earthquake of 2010 who received from Qatar 50 tonnes of relief materials, victims of flood ravaged Pakistan in 2010 with an amount of QR 300,000, and many more. It has also donated huge amounts of money to Gaza Strip inhabitants after the siege imposed on them by Israel, and made donations for reconstruction of Lebanon after the Israeli attacks on Hezbollah in 2006.

Qatar has also hosted international events such as the World Trade Organization's Doha Round in 2001 and Organization of Islamic Conference Summit in 2003; it will host the Conference on Climate Change in 2012. Qatar has served as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council from 2005 to 2007.

In 1995, Qatar established the Qatar Foundation which sponsors the Doha debate where students from the Middle East discuss political and cultural issues affecting the region, and the debate is broadcast live on BBC World News. The same foundation has invested heavily in education by building the "Education City", which represents many American universities, attended by Qatari students and students from the Middle East and South Asia.

Qatar has also used sports for branding and holds major tennis and golf tournaments and has won the bid to host the 2022 World Cup. In December 2012, Qatar will host World Squash Championship.

More importantly, it is Al Jazeera satellite television that put Qatar on the map. By tackling issues of the Arab World and which were for so long considered as taboos, by receiving opponents of Arab regimes at its studio, it has managed to garner a large watching audience from the Arab world and the West.

It was criticized by many regimes and its office was banned in few Arab regimes, including Morocco. "The sheer volume and tone of the criticism leveled at Al-Jazeera, especially from external sources, has only strengthened the popularity of the network among Arabs and Muslims" (Powers & Gilboa, 2007).

Al-Jazeera has become more popular than Qatar itself. Mamoun Fandy (2007, p.3) believes that: "[...] many Arab states still perceive Al-Jazeera to be an arm of the state of Qatar. That is why the responses to criticism by Al-Jazeera have been in keeping with state-to-state response rather than state-to-media response". Actually, on many occasions, diplomatic

relations between most Arab states and Qatar were strained sometimes because of unpleasant statements made on the channel, necessitating sometimes an intervention from the Emir of Qatar in person to repair the damage done by his channel as was the case between the U.A.E and Qatar in March 2012 when an Islamic scholar established in Qatar attacked the U.A.E live on Al-Jazeera. The emir of Qatar had to fly to the U.A.E to meet with its President to calm down the tension.

It is this controversial role of Al-Jazeera that Qatar is using to catapult its public diplomacy to higher levels. And it is this channel that paves the way for Qatar's government to exercise its role of mediation between conflicting parties.

However, we can notice that Qatar's PD is conducted mainly from state to state or from Al Jazeera to the public opinion in one way flow. There is no physical dialogue with foreign audiences. It seems to be more propaganda than PD, and the public cannot be fooled anymore.

Compared to the Qatari channel Al-Jazeera, Moroccan TV channels do not have a foreign audience, and even Moroccans themselves are not satisfied with their TV channels and turn to foreign channels. Those Moroccan channels are still broadcasting in an old-fashioned way, and using a pure Moroccan dialect, incomprehensible to most of Arab countries. There is no English in those channels, only French and Spanish are used on specific times for news broadcasting. Moroccan TV channels should have more channels with more focus on the foreign audiences, especially the Europeans. They should also broadcast interesting programs in classical Arabic, which every Arab viewer would understand, just like what Al-Jazeera does, and should have programs in French, Spanish and English. In brief, Morocco needs to invest more in the media industry.

2.3. Norway

Norway has some similarities with Qatar in the way it conducts its PD. Norway is also an oil rich country and uses its wealth for humanitarian purposes in many unstable regions, and even its charity organizations are conducting such humanitarian work. Its name is generally associated with Nobel Peace Prize given its strenuous efforts to mediate between different conflicting parties. Henrikson (2005) says:

Norway, long known for the Nobel Prize for Peace, is also a generous aid donor to poor countries. Its giving level, as a percentage of its national income, is the highest in the world. Even more remarkable, in the realm of diplomacy, is its work in peace facilitation, its most famous effort being focused on the Middle-East- the Oslo process.

Norwegian NGOs as well as the Norwegian government have been heavily involved in developmental work, promotion of human rights and peace-building in different parts of the world since the 1950s such as Sri Lanka, Colombia and the Middle East. A collaborative relationship has developed between the government and NGOs, where the Norwegian Foreign Ministry has learned to rely on the experiences and contact-networks of NGOs on the ground in crisis-regions, while participating NGOs could attract higher governmental financial support. Moreover, the MFA of Norway uses internet very successfully for outreach and communication. The site of the Ministry is very dynamic with continuous interactions and it received the Good design 2004 award of the Norwegian Design Council.

The researcher Linn Marianne Larssen (2009) describes the assets allowing Norway to be a major mediator as follows:

- Limited capabilities: Small, limited material capabilities facilitate the role as peace mediator. This can be turned into a 'comparative advantage' for Norway internationally.
- Unthreatening: No perceived great power interests and no means to coerce the parties to a conflict make small countries more trusted, as their intentions are viewed as more legitimate and their involvement non-threatening.
- Peaceful: A culture of peace and moral values are attractive to others, and, for a country with both, its foreign policies are perceived as credible and legitimate.

These three elements would perfectly apply to Morocco. The Kingdom is small with limited capabilities, and can identify with the expression “Small is beautiful”. It will be perceived as unthreatening once the conflict over “Western Sahara” is solved and the Maghreb Union is activated. It is peaceful, tolerant and loved by tourists, with a diversified ethnic and cultural composition.

2.4. The Maldives

The Maldives is a small and vulnerable island state threatened by global warming because of its low elevation; it is also one of the poorest countries of the world. Its economy is based mostly on tourism. Therefore, its foreign policy has put greater emphasis on strengthening commercial diplomacy with a view to attract foreign investments into the country.

The Maldives managed to brand itself thanks to tourism and climate change diplomacy. Today, tourism is the main catalyst for growth of the Maldives; it contributed 30% of GDP in 2011, after having received more than 900,000 tourists (mainly from Europe) in 2011.

PD in the Maldives is a joint activity where all governments officials get actively engaged, including the Head of State (former President Mohamed Nasheed). He had captured the attention of the world in 2009 when he held a meeting under the water in 2009 in an attempt to sound the alarm on global warming and climate change which is threatening the very existence of his country.

The Maldives must also be given credit for its openness to new technologies and its renovating approach in diplomacy. In fact, the Maldives was the first country to open a virtual embassy with the support of DiploFoundation and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. This initiative set the Maldives as a modernity-oriented country, able to meet the

upcoming challenges. The virtual embassy allowed the country to get noticed among diplomatic networks and to establish further diplomatic relationships at low-cost. In 2012, with the support of a business marketing and PR Corporation, the Maldives launched a digital media campaign to promote the country as a tourist destination aiming to gather 10000 fans of Maldives on Facebook. Aware of the success of the private sector in marketing and promotion, the Maldives had recourse to the renowned global public relations company Hill & Knowlton for advisory purposes on its public diplomacy and tourism promotion.

Despite its smallness and limited resources, the Maldives has been innovative and branded itself in remarkable ways. Morocco has so far been unable to come up with any innovative approaches for branding itself or capturing the world's attention, but it can do it because there are lots of youngsters with great ideas and potential, all what they need is support and encouragement.

2.5. Kenya

The small state of Kenya is pursuing a pragmatic diplomacy designed to improve the country's economic performance and it has set up plans geared towards speeding up economic development and realization of Vision 2030 which is about creating a globally competitive and prosperous nation with a high quality of life.

Examining the website of the Kenyan MFA, it is relatively impressive compared to Morocco. It is well designed and updated. It has links to other themes pertaining to branding such as "Brand Kenya Board" which can be followed on twitter, "Magical Kenya", "Tourism Board"...etc. Furthermore, it has a link for reporting corruption. This is indicative of the country's determination in fighting corruption and establishing good governance, a prerequisite for any branding strategy.

The Kenyan MFA understood the importance of PD in branding the country and achieving the Vision of 2030 of general development of the country. It is starting at home, by trying to win domestic constituency support, and fighting corruption and bureaucracy. In an interview on the CNN channel (African Voices, 2012), the wife of the Kenyan Prime Minister Ida Odinga explained that she tries to be always close to people and support them, that school children and women can even reach her in her accounts on Facebook and Twitter.

As a dimension of PD, the MFA launched: Diaspora Diplomacy, Economic Diplomacy, Peace Diplomacy, Environmental Diplomacy and Cultural Diplomacy. The MFA, aware of the valuable contribution its citizens around the world can make in promoting their country, has established a Directorate for Diaspora Diplomacy to manage and coordinate branding activities of Kenyan Diaspora. “The Directorate’s Vision is ‘To be a Premier Diaspora resource centre’ whereas its Mission is ‘To support the Diaspora and harness their potential for social-economic development through networking and information sharing’.” (MFA of Kenya, 2012). Morocco, although it has a significant Diaspora all over the world, did not think of establishing such a Directorate of Diaspora Diplomacy to coordinate and facilitate the individual activities of Moroccan citizens and associations abroad.

Under the President Mwai Kibaki and on his instructions, the Kenyan government established Brand Kenya Board in 2008 with a very ambitious charter. The work of the board targets the Kenyan citizens first and helps create rapport among Kenyans in Kenya and the Diaspora and inculcate patriotism spirit in them. On the other hand, it seeks to promote trade and tourism to support the Vision 2030 designed to make Kenya a middle income economy by 2030. According to its CEO, Mary Kimonye, BKB will help Kenya to promote economic development and prosperity by positioning the country “on the global arena in terms of: Investment, Sports, Leisure, Holiday, Residence, Icons, Culture/Heritage, plus Products & Services.” (Kass Media Group, no date)

There are some lessons to be learned from the precedent examples of PD practices. From US, we should learn that PD can be a waste of time and valuable resources if the actions on the ground are in contradiction with the message we try to sell to the world: actions speak louder than words. So if Morocco is to be serious about applying any PD strategy, it has to persuade its citizens first, then the foreign audiences, through tangible and credible reforms touching mainly the diplomatic field.

From Qatar, we can learn how successful media outlets can catapult a small and unheard of country to the level of emerging small states. It tells us also that opening its doors to the world for organizing international and regional events helps a small state in branding itself.

As for Norway, it is a good illustration of the successful use of soft power in PD and branding through mediation and peace facilitation. Morocco can learn from Norway's example as a peace facilitator between different protagonists in Africa or in the Arab world. Wherever there are conflicts, opportunities are never lacking. Morocco could at least intervene in Africa where it is rooted and well-perceived. It could have taken advantage of its strong tribal system and religious background to intervene in Mali when the independence-seeking group called "Azawad" took control of many parts of the country and started destroying world historical monuments.

The Maldives, though poor and very small, enjoys a good brand as a tourism destination thanks to advertising campaigns and the soft power of persuasion.

Finally, the efforts pursued by Kenya to brand itself and its hard work in this sense should serve as a wake-up call for Morocco to adopt a clear and sound policy of branding. At least Kenya has a vision that every Kenyan can learn about, and the citizens at home or abroad are at the center of the branding efforts. Morocco is more developed than Kenya, and has more advantages than Kenya. So the ball is in Morocco's court.

Chapter 3: Paving the way for PD in Morocco

PD is not a stand-alone domain. It is part of a broad process of democracy and good governance. Thus, if we want to start a PD strategy, we need to work on other fields as well, and which are in one way or another related to PD. Generally, developed countries with long-established practices of democracy and good governance do not face many difficulties when trying to pursue a strategy of PD because all the pillars are already there. As for developing countries like Morocco, they might face stumbling blocks if they try to embark upon a similar strategy without trying to pave the way through various reforms. And since PD relies mostly on the ordinary citizens, it will be hard for a country like Morocco to persuade its citizens to help in this ambitious process because of the many years of mistrust and hatred that citizens nurtured towards the government and its symbols. It is question of wining hearts and minds of domestic constituency first before trying to win those of foreign audiences.

3.1. Outreach and Communication

After having successfully passed the Arab Spring without serious damages and having received appreciation from the major world powers for its engagement and commitment to a series of reforms, Morocco benefits now of some credibility that he can only enhance by reaching out to its citizenry and to the rest of the world in a transparent and interactive way, to tell them that this small country is still willing to do more, and is open to the rest of the world, either friends or opponents.

3.1.1. Outreach to Domestic Audience

Diplomats like any other politicians have always worked alone and ignored the citizenry. Even if the government has started to open up to citizens, listen to them and engage them in a fruitful dialogue on social issues such as housing, price hikes, employment...etc, diplomats still confine themselves behind fortified walls and keep ignoring the citizenry. Now it is time for change, and because the people voted for the government, the government should listen to them and act accordingly.

Citizens should have the right to be informed and consulted if necessary on the course of their state's foreign policy. Moroccan diplomats cannot stay behind the scenes discussing crucial interests of the nation on the ground that they know more than ordinary citizens. A mindset change is necessary. We live in a different era, where the citizen is at the center of the interests, and failure to satisfy his needs may have adverse effects. The obsession of secrecy must cease, because it is counterproductive and anti-democratic. It only perpetuates bureaucratic pathologies. Today, with the proliferation of information, citizens can be empowered with information as much as politicians and diplomats, so we should rather keep them updated.

The MFA has to open up to citizens, give interviews to media, invite students to its headquarters, explain to them the nature of its work, organize conferences at universities and institutes, and offer more internship programs to students. Use of internet is also important at this stage, as it will enable the MFA to show that its diplomats are down to earth and open minded. The MFA has to start using social media networks, especially Facebook and Twitter, as they are the mostly used by the youth. The Minister himself should start blogging and tweeting, he might not appreciate that at the beginning, but those are very productive tools and can reach huge numbers of citizens in seconds.

With such measures, the MFA can win support of the domestic audience; therefore get credibility for addressing the foreign audience.

But to win citizenry's support will be a hard task, it entails patience and perseverance, and as K. Rana (2004) noted: "credibility at home is the hardest to earn, but the one element that facilitates his work (the diplomat) best of all".

3.1.2. Outreach to Foreign Audience

When setting the stage for PD, everybody should get on boat. The King can be the first person to facilitate the task. Usually, Heads of State can reach agreements on certain topics on which members of governments from both sides might spend hours or days without satisfactory results. Therefore, the leadership can be involved by visiting target foreign countries, to foster ties with governments, hence facilitate interaction between peoples..

Sports should also be used, especially football, which is popular almost all over the world. Government can host friendly matches with teams from other countries, or send its teams to foreign countries. I still remember when in 2008 I was in Thailand, and a waiter asked me where I am from, and as I said Morocco, he immediately said: "Oh, Haji (Name of a football player)! He is a very good player". I guess that Thai waiter would not have known Morocco if he was not a fan of football.

Embassies are well placed to convey the desire of the government to reinvent itself. The onus should be on ambassadors and the other diplomats to identify potential interlocutors from non state-actors of the host country, and determine the most efficient ways for engaging them in dialogue. For example, journalists can be targeted as they are multipliers of opinion.

Besides wining hearts and minds of domestic and foreign constituencies, there is a need to launch many reforms related to socio-political life. So far the government is on the right track

and an array of reforms are taking place and touching on the direct needs of citizens. With relevance to PD, there is so far no mention of it in the government discourse, yet the government seems to be very open to the idea of involvement of NGOs and the youth in the political life. PD is also reflected in some of the actions that the government took so far, and here are some of them:

- The vision 2020 for tourism which aims to promote Morocco as a tourism destination via development of eight distinct touristic regions, and development of low-cost air transport.
- Establishment of a new ministry which is the Ministry of Moroccan Diaspora and whose minister keeps visiting and meeting with the Moroccan Diaspora.
- The current minister of the MFA seems to be more dynamic and more determined to achieving something positive for his country.
- A debate is going on regarding a dire need for a dramatic change in the media policy and the public is insisting on a quality product.
- Different members of the government started giving interviews to TV channels to explain to the citizenry the decisions taken by the government and to engage in debates with non state-actors.

All those actions reflect a spirit of change and openness to the concept of PD. All stakeholders have to get on board and make consistent efforts towards setting the stage for a successful PD strategy.

3.2. Strengthening National Identity

Morocco has the advantage of being a geographical and cultural mosaic. Arabs, Berbers and people of sub-Saharan, Jewish and Andalusian origin have been living together peacefully for centuries, and shaping the country's unique land and culture. Their languages, cultures and traditions have contributed to the unique richness of Moroccan culture.

Nevertheless, Moroccan Berbers and who make up about 50% of the population have been marginalized at certain stages of history, which made them feel uncomfortable and started distancing themselves from Moroccan society in general. The King Mohamed VI took some steps towards enhancing their identity with the establishment of the Royal Institute for Amazigh Language and recognition of Amazigh Language as an official language along with Arabic in Morocco.

Practical actions are needed to fully integrate those people in the Moroccan society and to build a national culture as a common frame of reference for the whole nation through inclusion and participation of all ethnicities. It has to start at an early age, at home and at school, and go hand in hand with the economic reforms of the country, mainly through development of rural areas and integration of its isolated Berber population.

3.2.1. Education

Schools should play a vital role in engaging students of different ethnicities with each other. The History curriculum should emphasize the role played by all Moroccan ethnicities in the battle for freedom and the building of the independent Morocco, without overlooking one ethnicity or the other.

The Citizenship Education curriculum should instill in the students the spirit of patriotism, tolerance and multiculturalism in a fashionable and attractive way including games and workshops. Students from different ethnicities should be trained from the primary school on how to sit together and deliberate on issues of common interest to them, so that they will learn how to accept each other and how to resolve their differences with dialogue. Thus, when they become adults, a synergy would have been created between them, and gradually, the small

unjustified prejudices held by each ethnicity against the other would fade away in a blend of cultural mixtures.

3.2.2. Civic Engagement

Associations in Morocco are growing in numbers, and instead of watching them desperately struggling for some socio-cultural demands, the government should provide them with all the assistance possible, and then engage them in dialogue on national identity. National identity can also be discussed and explained to NGOs on the sidelines of some activities such as Literacy Programs and National Initiative for Human Development programs.

NGOs can approach citizens and engage them in a two way dialogue on the role of citizens in this new era of democracy and participation. NGOs and Cooperative Societies established in rural areas should not be overlooked (a high percentage of the population live in rural areas) and they can be targeted by urban NGOs. The idea is to train NGOs and citizens on dialogue on one hand, and strengthen their national identity on the other.

3.2.3. Media and public campaigns

Media establishes the perception of countries as it attracts more audience than anything else. Thus, wise use of media is advantageous for building national pride. Media has a key role in boosting national identity through inculcating the spirit of loyalty and belonging to the Moroccan nation without excluding any segment of society. It can do that by promoting certain catch phrases that appeal to all segments of Moroccan society. There is a good example from South Africa, which immediately after the end of Apartheid launched the slogan of “rainbow nation” and used it aggressively. It was a source for inspiration and reconciliation of the whole nation. Morocco can rely on TV and Radio stations which can host debates between representatives of different ethnical associations, and emphasize the unity of the nation through some unifying catch phrases. New patriotic songs have to be produced, and

should be compatible with the culture of the young generations, with a focus on the beauty of Morocco, its history, cultures, people, ambitions...etc. The final goal is to groom a new generation that firmly identifies with Moroccan identity and takes pride in its cultural diversity.

3.3. Building Citizen Diplomacy

The U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy (2012) defines citizen diplomacy as “the engagement of individual citizens in programs and activities primarily in the voluntary, private sector that increase cross-cultural understanding and knowledge between people from different cultures and countries, leading to a greater mutual respect”. As far as Morocco is concerned, there is no such thing as Citizen Diplomacy, albeit Moroccans are known for their tolerance and for easily forging relationships with foreigners.

While you can come across so many American volunteers in different parts of the world, I never came across one single Moroccan person who was involved in a foreign country as a volunteer. It will mean a lot to people of a foreign country to see few Moroccan volunteers who come to provide expertise and help. In the meantime, such activities will help people of both countries to expand their horizons, and build long lasting relationships.

The government and civil society must encourage Moroccans living inside or outside of Morocco to establish friendship associations with people of different countries of the world. These associations should benefit from the government support through orientation and media coverage. The government is invited to seek agreement with target foreign countries for hosting international students who would like to come to Morocco and stay with Moroccan families; they should be from different countries, not only large ones like the U.S. It will

allow a people to people exchange; build mutual trust between people of both countries. And later on, when PD is in place, those associations will allow an unofficial public visibility of Morocco. All it takes is initiative from the government vis-à-vis foreign countries and the rest can be achieved by civil society and by the people, especially the youth who see the world of today as a small village without borders, and are eager to travel, meet other people, and learn foreign languages and cultures.

There are some music festivals held every year in Morocco and they get more and more popular across the country and even attract foreign bands and public: Festival d'Essaouira, World Sacred Music, Gnawa World Music Festival, Mawazine, Tangiers' Jazz Festival, Boulevard des Jeunes Musiciens. The MFA in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture should seek a role in those events and coordinate them. The MFA has the potential to help those local bands to forge relationships with foreign bands, allowing an exchange between both sides.

3.4. Reputation Management

Prior to branding Morocco and correcting the disturbing stereotypical images that foreign audience in some foreign countries nurtured about it, we need to start gradually presenting a good image of the country. When meeting the Moroccan Diaspora, diplomats should remind them of their duties as citizens-ambassadors and that they should stay away from all illegal and suspicious activities. They should remind those who live in Europe, either as immigrants or even as naturalized citizens of the host country, that they are not in their home country, and that they should abide by laws of the receiving country.

As for the countries of the Gulf, Morocco needs to correct the perception embedded in the minds of those people about Moroccan women being “witches or prostitutes”. The MFA and

Moroccan embassies in the Gulf should look for the elite Moroccan females, and give them the opportunity to interact with the audience of the receiving country. It can take the form of lectures given by Moroccan female experts on politics or religion, knowing that Morocco has female religious preachers who can play a proactive role by voicing their religious knowledge. We also have in North of Morocco female bands called “Andalusian Bands” which perform Islamic and spiritual songs, but their voice does not go beyond Morocco, while they are unique in the Arab and Islamic world. If such women are given the opportunity, people in the rest of the Arab world will start rethinking the prejudice they hold against Moroccan women.

We need also to manage reputation of Morocco on the internet. In fact, internet has become easily accessible all over the world, and it has become easy to obtain or post any information which might be true or wrong. Sometimes, one comes across some articles, forums or videos which portray Morocco in a negative way. The MFA should encourage its staff to start using internet in their spare time, to learn how to blog and twitter, and to surf the net and read articles or blogs which might somehow be spreading rumors or inaccuracies about Morocco, or even contain hatred discourse.

3.5. Reform of the MFA

As many states, both developed and developing, are reforming their MFAs, Morocco should not be left behind. A general reform of its MFA is badly needed, it should concern essentially recruitment and assignments, training, diplomatic representations, and most importantly establishment of a Department for PD and Public Affairs with all its relevant sections.

3.5.1. Recruitment and Assignments

Recruitment has to be based on qualifications and experience, like any other governmental position, away from nepotism or favouritism practices. Likewise, assignment in overseas

posts should be on a rotation basis, and should depend on the capabilities of diplomats and their willingness to be posted in certain countries instead of others.

Assignments in the positions of PDOs should target the multi-skilled diplomats, who have the prerequisites to reach a much broader audience. Strong communication skills, fluency in foreign languages, proven interest in current and international affairs are paramount for these new PDOs. They must be outgoing and able to engage with the foreign community and undertake different types of social activities while abroad. On the other hand, the MFA should provide them with all the incentives and tools for fulfilling their duties.

3.5.2. Training

Our prospective diplomats might be graduates of different disciplines such as law or economy, but they will need a comprehensive training in diplomacy. Regular training on-the-job is the ideal solution for diplomats as they will be learning from their daily working tasks and from their training. Training will keep them abreast of the constantly evolving practices of diplomacy. The government should find adequate solutions for training the majority of those fulfilling diplomatic functions, starting from the Minister himself.

The recently established Moroccan Academy of Diplomatic Studies cannot really fulfill that role. Just like the education in Morocco in general, it does not reflect an educational institution open to its environment. In fact, the syllabus of the Academy, as posted on its website, sticks to the old classical way of teaching; it focuses on international relations, history of Morocco and its foreign policy, diplomatic and consular practices of Morocco, but says nothing about PD, Branding or E-diplomacy for example.

The same Academy signed agreements of partnership and exchange with other diplomatic institutes from Croatia, Argentina, Brazil and Qatar. None of these countries is renowned for being prominent in teaching diplomacy.

It will be more beneficial for that Institute to sign exchange accords with other foreign institutions which are renowned for offering worldwide recognized courses, like those in Europe or in the U.S. and who can assess their training needs and accordingly assign lecturers with broad expertise in the latest trends and practices of diplomacy.

The MFA can even contact DiploFoundation, a non-profit foundation in Malta, which is committed to help small states engage meaningfully in international relations. DiploFoundation can design customized training courses to be delivered through a combination of face-to-face and online learning depending on the availability of diplomats. This is the only way to increase the quality and professionalism of Moroccan diplomats.

3.6. Establishment of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Department

3.6.1. Public Affairs Section

The role of this section is to garner support for PD through the following measures:

- Meetings between officials from the Department of PD and domestic citizens to explain to them the vision of the government in general and of the MFA in particular.
- Interaction with citizens through all communication channels, including TV, Radio, print and online media, social media networks, emails, phone, or letters.
- Developing online PD portals for interaction with the Diaspora.
- Issuing press releases.

3.6.2. Educational and Cultural Affairs Section

Its mission is to establish mutual understanding between Moroccans and the people of other countries to promote friendly and sustained relationships. It should introduce Morocco with its cultural diversity and rich heritage to the rest of the world, but will also allow Moroccans to learn from other people's experiences. The main means of action of this section should be:

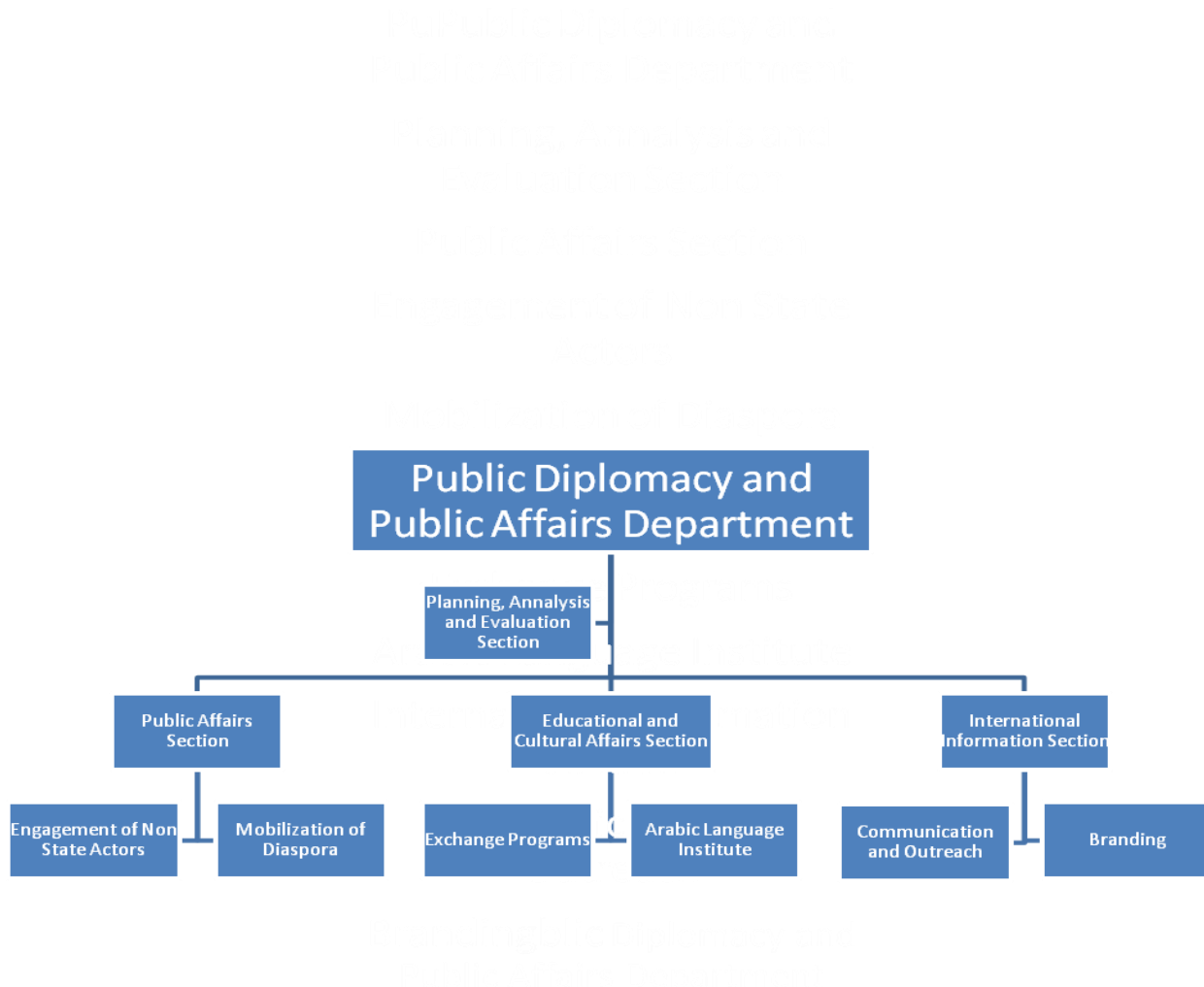
- Institute of Arabic Language and Moroccan Culture, which will start small to grow slowly but surely thanks to the assistance of Moroccan Diaspora. (In the beginning, this institute will start in countries of interest to Morocco only, Moroccan volunteers living in foreign countries can help in teaching, and Embassy facilities can be used temporarily as classes can be held in the evening time).
- Educational exchange between Morocco and certain target countries, allowing foreign citizens to live a rich experience of study and life in Morocco.
- Organizing cultural events such as Music festivals and exhibitions in the target countries.
- Organizing academic lectures which have to be given by leading Moroccan scholars in the target countries.
- Encouraging Sports Exchange between Morocco and developed countries, allowing a huge number of foreign athletes to come on training sessions in Morocco and vice-versa.

3.6.3. International Information Section

The International Information Section is the core of the PD strategy. It should be the channel of communication with overseas audiences, which will interact with them and persuade them by all means of communication, in terms of the foreign policy of Morocco, thus leading them to play a vital role in positively changing the official policy of their countries towards Morocco. It has to oversee and follow up on PD as implemented by overseas embassies. The

International Information Department is also in charge of generating a branding strategy for the country. Moreover, it should serve as an interlocutor with the foreign media.

3.6.4. Proposed Organizational Chart



*“The really crucial link in the international communication chain is the last three feet,
which is bridged by personal contact, one person talking to another”*

Edward R. Murrow

Chapter 4: Implementation Process

4.1. Public Diplomacy

Now, it is clear in our minds as Moroccan citizens that Morocco needs to reach out to the rest of the world and interact with them in order to create receptivity to its foreign policy. It is also clear that we need to work on our image and make it look better by promoting our achievements both internally and externally through mass media. This will be done through PD on the one hand, and branding on the other. Each one of them complements the other.

Small states like Morocco usually have budget limitations and should be very specific in their choice of themes of PD and the target countries. Thus, Morocco should pursue consistent efforts of PD, directed towards specific themes and countries that are considered most important and most relevant to its foreign policy.

The Kingdom cannot afford a large scale PD strategy which would involve interaction with all or most countries of the world through a variety of expensive platforms. Neither can it embark on a big branding project such as expanding its small airlines fleet of 40 airplanes or establishing a worldwide Arabic institute all over the world. Such actions require huge funds, which can be hard to harness at this time of financial crisis sweeping all over the world. To

this effect, it is wise to start small and grow slowly, and once the actions start yielding some results, credibility will prevail and it will be easy to get bigger funds and hire more staff.

4.1.1. Establishment of a PD Board (PDB)

Public Diplomacy is very broad and stakeholders can be from so many different organizations with different agendas, but they have to work with each other and their actions have to be coordinated under the umbrella of one entity which is the PDB.

4.1.1.1. Composition of Public Diplomacy Board

I envision this board to be formed of the following stakeholders:

PD liaison officers: they should pay attention to all activities of different ministries and government agencies and incorporate PD policies in them whenever appropriate.

PD officer representing the MFA: he should be a practitioner diplomat in the rank of ambassador, with many years of experience, and having been posted overseas for few years. He should be open-minded, good communicator, positive thinker and motivator, with a strong interest in ICT, especially the use of internet and social media networks.

Ministry of Diaspora Affairs representative: he should be a senior officer who was already exposed to work with Moroccan Diaspora and know very well their problems and concerns.

Ministry of Tourism representative: preferably a graduate of one of the institutes of tourism and having under his belt many years of experience in tourism promotion and events organization.

Ministry of Culture's representative: an employee from the ministry, preferably an intellectual person with interest in foreign cultures.

Media representatives: normally career journalists from the mainstream media who will help in designing PD by sharing their perspectives with members of the board, and by reflecting recommendations of the board in their media outlets.

Diaspora representatives: preferably elected representatives of the Diaspora in different countries of the world where the number of Moroccan Diaspora is significant, for example the prominent countries of Europe where Moroccan Diaspora is relatively high should have one representative for each country.

NGOs representatives: for the purpose of this roadmap, they have to be prominent organizations from different regions of Morocco representing all Moroccan cultures.

4.1.1.2. Funding Resources

The project will start with minimum funds and small number of employees. The funds are due to cover the following expenses:

- Functional expenses of PD officers such as travel, accommodation, meals...etc.
- Training on the job of PDOs.
- Exchange Programs between Moroccan NSAs and their foreign counterparts.
- Arabic Language Institute.
- Think-Tank engagement into international issues.
- Artistic performance and exhibitions.
- Branding Morocco: publicity contracts with prominent Satellite TV channels, E-branding by a reputable company, print and online publications.

- Platforms of interaction with domestic and foreign audiences, for example “Friends of Morocco Association” and “Moroccan Citizens Diplomats Online Association”.
- Opinion surveys to assess the impact of PD activities.

The business community will be solicited to contribute 20% of the initial budget. Target sectors will be limited to tourism industry and large exporters. In return, they will enjoy long-term partnership with the PD Department and will be able to use the official channels for branding their products and services. PD Department will give them the chance to reach out to markets overseas where their businesses can thrive.

Another 20% will be levied through ports of entry user fees with a small increase of 7 U.S. dollars in the ticket price for passengers coming to Morocco through air or sea ports.

On the other hand, Morocco will approach the E.U and the U.S which have provided him with substantial aid funds in the last years. Morocco is actually the largest recipient of aid from the E.U. Thanks to its serious engagement in reforms, Morocco has become a role model and a case study of reform, making itself a target of aid from the E.U and the U.S. (Malka & Alterman, 2006).

An extra source of funding is the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation which can provide Morocco with reasonable funds, knowing that the said agency puts Morocco among its countries of priority.

At the end, the MFA will have to provide less than one third of the funds.

4.1.1.3. Timeline

The timeline I suggest here is based on cases of other countries.

October-December 2013:

- Promote the project at home on the local media and internet.
- Solicit funding.
- Assign PD personnel.

January 2014:

- Launching of the PD strategy.
- Meeting with Moroccan citizens and Moroccan Diaspora, especially multipliers of opinion: explain the strategy, role of NSAs and modus operandi.
- Seek advice of a branding consultant.

February 2014

- First PD activity: interaction with foreign audiences.
- Launch of digital outreach campaign.
- Begin on the job training of PD officers.

July 2014

- Arrival of international students
- Music tours of Moroccan bands
- Teaching of Arabic at the language Institute at Embassies facilities

December 2014

- First year review: evaluation of the whole strategy

4.1.1.4. Staffing and Duties

The full time staff will be initially made up of a limited number of officers and it will expand as the resources permit:

- **Undersecretary of PD:** posted at the capital Rabat, he will make sure that his strategy is in line with the official traditional diplomacy and changes accordingly. He should enjoy close relationships with the Prime Minister and the other Ministers in order to harness support and funds for the project. He should have authority to allocate budget to his posted officers, oversee and coordinate their work in the field and provide them with the necessary tools for conducting their work.
- **PA officers:** posted at home, they will be looking for the most influential NSAs at home, and those among Moroccan Diaspora. They should be able to move all over the country and meet with multipliers of opinion such as journalists, academics, artists, athletes, students, NGOs, businesses...etc.
- **PD Officers:** Diplomats posted at foreign countries will be assigned missions of PDOs in certain target countries. The Head of Mission in each diplomatic representation will be spearheading PD amidst his team. To avoid reluctance by most diplomats to accept working on PD, it would be better to start the practice at slow pace and with limited assignments. Based on foreign policies of Morocco and importance of some countries, I suggest an initial number of nineteen assignments of PD in the following countries: Algeria, South Africa, France, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Canada, U.S, U.K, Saudi Arabia, U.A.E, Turkey, Brazil, Russia, India, China and Malaysia.
- **Digital Diplomats:** the initial number suggested is eight; these digital diplomats have to be well-versed in internet applications and social media networks. Moreover, they must be fluent in foreign languages, especially French, Spanish and English. Their

role is to develop online platforms for engaging foreign publics and making them aware of the foreign policies of Morocco. They will be using the internet to give the government's side of the stories that affect Morocco before they get widely published by the media. Furthermore, they will have to develop the website of the MFA and keep it updated. They should work hand in hand with PD officers on the field and coordinate their actions.

4.1.2. PD Strategy

According to priorities of Moroccan government, PD will be focused on Advanced Regionalization, Algeria, the Maghreb Union, the European Union, Africa and the rest of the world. As said earlier, Morocco is aiming to implement an advanced regionalization, which will be a better way to tackle the issue of "Western Sahara".

Prior to starting the PD strategy, we have to conduct large scale polls in target countries to measure the general perception that multipliers of opinion in the target countries have about Morocco in terms of the themes we aim to work on, be it the advanced regionalization policy, activation of the Maghreb Union, furthering its advanced status with E.U, integration with African countries, or fostering partnership with countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

In order to turn Morocco into a regional player and a tourist hub, Moroccan government needs to focus its PD on its neighboring countries and exploit the commonly shared geography, cultures and traditions. This is well-articulated by Melissen (2005): "PD above all thrives in highly interdependent regions and between countries that are linked by multiple transnational relationships and therefore a substantial degree of 'interconnectedness' between their civil societies".

4.1.2.1. Themes of Moroccan PD

- **Advanced Regionalization**

The government has to reach out to Sahrawi people and explain to them the merits of advanced regionalization. Mass media has to come into play at this level and broadcast a consistent message through different communication outlets, using a catching phrase that will appeal to hearts and minds of Sahrawi people. Just like what the late King Hassan II did when he launched the slogan: “the country is clement and forgiving”, appealing on those Sahrawi who were living in exile under the Polisario rule to re-consider their positions and comeback home which will forgive them.

It is said that many Sahrawi people who live in Morocco claim to be pro-Moroccans, but are not in the heart and want an independent state. PA officers should go to Sahara, look for them, listen to their perceptions on the issue, and engage them in a dialogue. On the other hand, these officers should target the Sahrawi multipliers of opinion who are for the Moroccan proposal, mainly chiefs of tribes and NGOs who share the same Sahrawi identity with the independence-seeking Sahrawis, they have to explain to them the vision of the government of engaging civil society to help in solving the dispute. The final goal is to have these multipliers of opinions interacting with their counterparts who are anti-Moroccans and reach a mutual understanding.

There is a good opportunity to be seized in the Families Visits Exchange Program established many years ago, and which allows Sahrawis living in the disputed area to come to Morocco to visit their relatives and vice-versa. Needless to say that those families feel much better when meeting each other in the Moroccan territory as Morocco spends lavishly on developing the living standards of Sahrawi people living under its sovereignty, which in fact led some former separatists to stay in Morocco and recognize its sovereignty on “Western Sahara”. All what is

needed is to mobilize ordinary citizens and NGOs established in the region to form ties with those families and explain to them the positive aspects of the Moroccan position of granting expanded autonomy to “Western Sahara” under the sovereignty of Morocco. Because we have to keep in mind that many of them are not educated and had been influenced by the POLISARIO side of the story, so Morocco needs to tell them its own side of the story.

Digital diplomats will launch forums for that issue as well, and engage with people who reject the solution of granting “Western Sahara” a limited autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty.

PD officers posted in countries which recognize the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic as a country should engage with NGOs in those countries in a dialogue, explain to them the pragmatic position of Morocco with the autonomy plan.

TV channels have to devote emissions for the issue as well, and bring on board people from both camps to tackle the issue in a transparent manner, and on the same occasion, give the floor to experts from a Moroccan think-tank, called for example “Moroccan Strategic Center for Research and Analysis” and which can bring in the academic perspective.

- **Rapprochement with Algeria**

It is noteworthy that Moroccan and Algerian peoples have always enjoyed good relationships. Algeria is important to Morocco because it is the immediate country that supports the POLISARIO, and is a key player for activation the Maghreb Union.

Algerian citizens can be instrumental in influencing their government which supports the POLISARIO. Therefore, it is crucial to approach those citizens through different outreach programs.

Moroccan government should seek conclusion of exchange programs with its Algerian counterpart. A program of journalists’ exchange would be beneficial, knowing that Algerian

press is most of the time against Morocco's policies in the region. Algerian journalists would be allowed in this case to spend a certain period in Morocco and experience events first hand. When they return back to Algeria, those journalists will be supposed to have understood the position of Morocco and would start tackling the issue of "Western Sahara" from a different perspective. Moroccan journalists who will go to Algeria would be able to argue and defend the Moroccan policies in the region.

The Ministry of Education should launch a Students Exchange Program to allow students from Algeria to come and spend some time in Morocco and learn more about it, and vice versa. Summer programs can also be used to allow children from Algeria to come and live with Moroccan families, and vice-versa.

Morocco has always invited Algerian artists to come perform in Morocco, and there is even a comedy show (called Diwana) between a Moroccan comedian and an Algerian one; this trend should increase, especially when we see how much youngsters from both countries share the same artistic interests, for example Rai music.

PD officers in Algeria should also be dynamic and start organizing activities related to the common historical heritage between Morocco and Algeria, for example, seminar on Moroccan-Algerian resistance to the French Occupation, stressing the role played by Morocco in supporting the Algerian resistance.

Hopefully, such initiatives will exercise a soft power on Algerian citizens, who will in turn spearhead a change in the streamline policy of Algeria towards Morocco.

- **The European Union**

PD officers posted in the target countries in the E.U should keep their ears to the ground, and whenever there is an opportunity, they should seize it. For example, when the Moroccan Minister of Diaspora comes to visit immigrants and discuss their problems, PD officers

should invite local NGOs interested in immigrants' rights issues, engage them into a fruitful dialogue and forge a long-term relationship with them.

Morocco often organizes cultural events and artistic exhibitions in European countries in addition to establishment of sister cities and students exchange programs. PD officers can join the organizers and set up PD activities: lectures by prominent Moroccan immigrants, collaborative mini-project between Moroccan immigrant students and their European counterparts, guidance and assistance of Moroccan families hosting students as part of Students Exchange program, debate on development of relationships between Morocco and the E.U.

As Moroccan media undergoes deep changes and development among strong demands from the public for a betterment of media services delivered to public, it will be useful to seize the opportunity and come up with innovative TV programs. Like Qatar has Doha debate, Morocco can win at all aspects by scheduling a monthly debate to be called for example "Mediterranean Debate". It will host academics from all over the world to discuss different topics and have as audience Moroccan and other Maghrebin students on one hand, and European students on the other and who will ask questions and make comments. However, this will need a well-trained and experienced Moroccan moderator who can guide the debate in a very intelligent way, advantageous to the Moroccan interests.

There is a big potential for such debate to succeed because no country has yet emerged from the Maghreb or Africa to play this role of a bridge between the two sides of the Mediterranean, and Morocco has the geographical advantage of being in Africa and overlooking Europe, or to quote the late King Hassan II: "Morocco's roots are in Africa and its Branches are in Europe".

- **Virtual World**

It is a fact now, with social media networks, news spread very fast and people know them before they reach the classical media. A simple message can reach millions around the globe at no cost. Use of social media has become a trend among politicians and officials from developed and developing countries alike.

In Morocco, internet is very popular among the youth who use it for interaction and networking. The number of Moroccan users of Facebook has reached 4696840, making it number 37 on the list out of more than 200 countries, 43% of users are in the age range of 18-24 (SocialBakers, 2012). Families in Morocco rely a lot on internet platforms for chatting with their relatives living overseas, mainly in Europe.

However, the situation at the MFA is not the same. There is no mention at all of an account on Facebook or Twitter of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. With an account on Facebook, the Minister can reach out to the large majority of the youth who can interact with him, ask him questions and leave comments. With an account on Twitter, the Minister can tweet and let his followers read what he says about relevant issues, where he is travelling and what are the results of his meetings.

Our embassies and ambassadors overseas should also be encouraged to open accounts on those platforms, allowing them to add another layer of diplomacy to the traditional one. They can use those accounts to announce events organized by the Moroccan embassy in the host country, so the news spread quickly among interested audiences. On the other hand, with such accounts, it becomes easy for journalists to get hold of the diplomats and get the information from them first-hand instead of some unbalanced media reports.

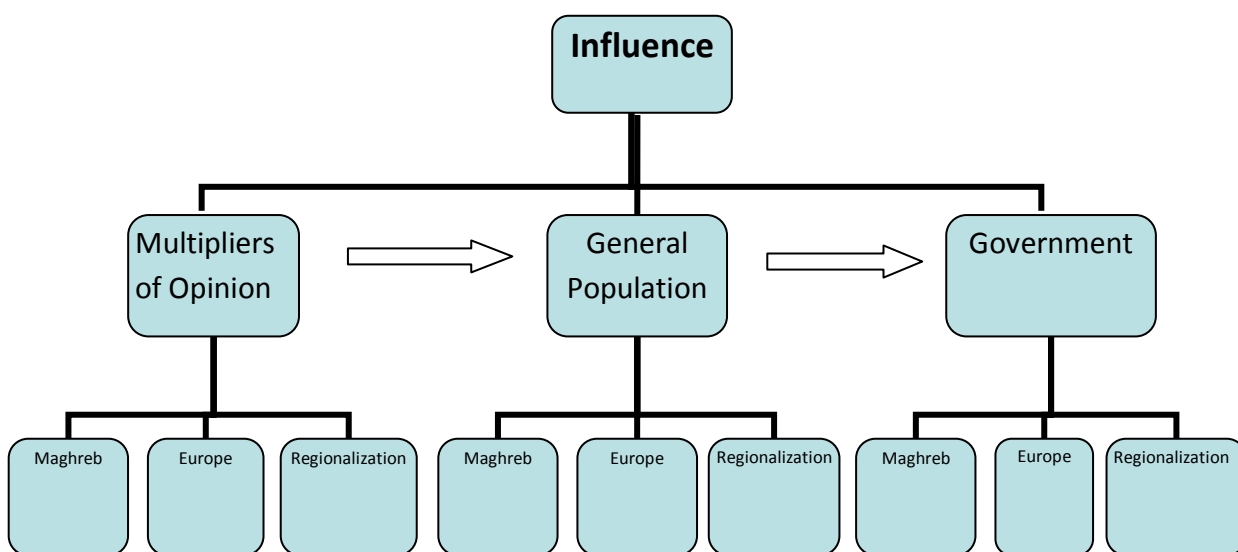
The digital diplomats will be working round-the-clock on the Website of the MFA, highlighting the key issues and adding relevant links. They will be updating the website of the

Arabic Institute and Moroccan Culture, which in addition to Arabic lessons, should be updated with new weekly topics for discussion on Moroccan culture and traditions.

They will also use adequate software to send text messages to mobile phones of key influencers in the target countries such as journalists, politicians, NGOs, businesses...etc to notify them of any event organized by Moroccan government or NSAs in the receiving country and which might represent an opportunity for them, for example the traditional Moroccan Kaftan show might attract businesses, and political lectures might attract academia. They will also send text messages of Arabic words-of-the-day to subscribers at the Institute of Arabic Language and Moroccan Culture, and members of “Friends of Morocco Association”.

4.1.2.2. Modus Operandi

In the figure below is an example of three domains of PD for Morocco: Maghreb, Europe, and advanced regionalization. In this case, PDOs will engage foreign multipliers of opinions (journalists, academics, artists, businesses, NGOs...etc) in a constructive dialogue. As they get favorable to the position of Morocco, these elites will spread their opinion to the general population which in turn will form a public opinion and shape the perspective of the government. After one year from implementation of the strategy, we can measure the impact of our PD on multipliers of opinions, on the general population and on the government.



If we apply this model on the theme of Maghreb, it will imply having our PD officers seeking to reach out to citizens of the other countries of the Maghreb region (Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Mauritania), through different people to people exchanges. Multipliers of opinion in those countries will start understanding the position of Morocco, and as time passes by, and they still engage with their Moroccan counterparts, they will start holding favorable views to the position of Morocco: students, athletes, artists, journalists, NGOs...etc. Gradually, those favorable views will pass on to the general populations, which in the long term will form a public opinion favorable to the Maghreb Union, and in turn such public opinion will positively affect the general policies of the respective governments towards the issue of the Maghreb Union.

Likewise, for Europe, we can assume that the PD Board will start reaching out to Europeans citizens through exchange programs such as the Institute of Arabic Language and Moroccan Culture, students' exchange, journalists' exchange...etc. Once they start understanding Moroccans' tolerance and openness to the world, especially to Europe, they will show more interest in discovering the country with all its characteristics. And they will share their perceptions with the general population, which will get curious about knowing more about Morocco. As the Europeans start changing the stereotypes they built about Morocco over the years and become more favourable to further levels of cooperation between the Kingdom and Europe, their governments' position will have to adapt accordingly.

The third theme is advanced regionalization. We assume in this case that Morocco would start the plan of advanced regionalization in different parts of the country, but without seeking to implement it immediately on the Sahrawi Provinces as such attempt would be doomed to failure at the moment. And let us take for example Spain, a country whose position on the "Western Sahara" issue is not very favourable to Morocco, but pursues a successful policy of regionalization, we can use this factor for shaping opinions on the choice of Morocco to start

advanced regionalization. We can imagine for example that our PD officers posted in Spain start in 2013 to hold formal and informal meetings with journalists, invite them to Morocco for a period of three months as part of an exchange program, and take them to the diverse regions of Morocco, then those journalists would understand the position of Morocco and when they go back home, they would reflect that in their articles. At the same time, Spanish students who come to Morocco as part of university exchange programs would learn about regions and cultural diversity of the country and when they return to Spain, they would share the Moroccan experience through their stories and their school presentations and essays. In line with these initiatives, other PD programs would be targeting Spanish population, for example artistic exchange, joint athletes' competitions, academic lectures...etc.

In the second year, we imagine that with more PD efforts from part of Morocco, the position of multipliers of opinions shifts from understanding to favorability. And with the domino effect, their message will spread to millions of citizens.

In the third year, the perception of the public will spread to the Spanish government who might express his interest in the Moroccan model of regionalization. At this stage, Morocco should encourage exchange collaboration programs between its regions and Spanish regions, for example: Twin Autonomous Regions.

Furthermore, with the variety of PD efforts, there will be a rapprochement between people of both countries, and Spain will consider further increase of its investments in Morocco, and its citizens will look forward to come to holiday in Morocco. The rapprochement will be so important that Spain would become a close friend to Morocco and more aware and understanding of its foreign policy related to "Western Sahara".

4.2. Building the Moroccan Nation Brand

4.2.1. Introduction

Today, all countries compete to attract the attention of the world, and branding has become very popular among governments willing to attract tourists, investors or students. Each country tries to look unique and different. Many countries have launched national campaigns or even established Branding Boards. Examples abound: Brand Kenya Board, Council for Joint Presentation of Slovakia abroad, South Korea's Presidential Council on Nation Branding, International Marketing Council of South Africa ,Brand India, Branding Columbia, Brand Bangladesh...etc.

Morocco has a good basis to become a strong brand in the world. It is rich in traditions and cultures, has so many beaches and resorts, iconic cities like Marrakech and Agadir that appeal to lots of tourists, tasty dishes ...etc. All these assets should motivate the government to start a national brand. But if Morocco wants to capture the attention of the rest of the world, it must work on its image by creating a strong synergy between the state and the national products and services in international media.

In the minds of foreigners, the image of Morocco is fuzzy and not clear enough because of preexisting prejudices and lack of interest. Both state and NSAs pursue some branding efforts in a separate manner, thus leading to conflicting perceptions. Some foreigners think of Morocco as a progressive modern country, others think of it as a country of poverty, crime, prostitution and illegal immigration to Europe; some think of it as a country of civilization and heritage, others think it is just like any other backward African country.

Tellingly, the 2010 Brand Index ranked Morocco as Number 60 on the list, way behind many small states such as Maldives, Bermuda, Mauritius, Barbados, Namibia...and many more. Therefore, a nation branding campaign is crucial for Morocco. And it is only with branding

that we can attract foreign investments and more tourists, and achieve economic growth and employment.

4.2.2. Survey on Morocco's National Brand

I did a small survey on Morocco's National Brand (see Appendix); candidates were asked to answer honestly with what they feel about Morocco. All of them are well-educated, well-traveled, and from different countries of the world. About half of them have visited Morocco, the other half just heard about it in varying degrees.

- All respondents expressed their interest in visiting Morocco for holidays and some of them added that it is their wish to visit it again or for the first time, and used expression "touristic country" or "very beautiful".

- All respondents agreed that Morocco can become the capital of tourism in North Africa.

- Most respondents agreed that Morocco is a unique country, but some very perceptive respondents hesitated to consider it as so, and agreed that although it might have similarities with countries of the region, it is still different from them by the people and by the monarchical regime.

- Marrakech was the city that most respondents know as an imperial city, others mentioned Fes and Meknes.

- Surprisingly, all the respondents rated security in Morocco more than average; this is a good indicative for tourism future because usually reputation of high rate crimes affects the propensity to travel.

- They all seemed to agree that Morocco is a modern progressive country preserving its authenticity.

- Only those who lived in Morocco gave names of some Moroccan brand products, and only one female respondent cited the Kaftan.
- Moroccan people were generally portrayed as friendly and hospitable.
- The majority is also interested in Moroccan culture and heritage.
- Environment is seen as important for Morocco too by the majority of respondent, but one of them highlighted that although the government cares about environment, the Moroccan citizens are not educated enough about it.
- Only four respondents knew about the reforms pursued by the regime.
- All respondents said they would recommend Morocco for tourists and investors, and the majority said they would recommend it for living.
- All respondents agreed to join a supposedly established “Friends of Morocco Association” if invited to and as long as there are travel facilities.

4.2.3. Conclusions from the survey

From this survey, we can conclude that Morocco has an established reputation as a tourist hub, even though it is not marketed well enough as such. An advertising campaign would boost the image that such people have about Morocco and bring them in for holidays.

We need to have a logo which represents Morocco the best (Government can invite citizens to compete for the best design of the country’s logo, it is also an opportunity to enhance national pride); a slogan that will be inherent to Morocco and reflect the new era we live in; and publicity in international media.

Imperial cities of Morocco are also well known given their historic identities, examples: Marrakech, Fes and Tangiers. These are cities that speak for themselves, even without

marketing. Sometimes it seems that people remember these cities from a movie they have watched, a book they had read or a story they heard from a friend.

The positive responses of interviewees are not the result of an aggressive branding campaign, but it is rather what we can consider a passive advertising, by which the places speak for themselves without having the government doing enough for promoting them.

Unfortunately, none of the respondents referred to Morocco as a moderate religious country, which is very important for Arab-Islamic countries in this time of terrorism and Islamic extremism.

Morocco needs to enhance its national brand as a tourist destination with breathtaking landscapes. This branding should not be a stand-alone activity; it has to be part of a comprehensive branding strategy where other stakeholders namely line ministries, government agencies, NGOs, businesses, academia, artists, athletes...etc are involved and their activities coordinated. The image that Morocco needs to establish of itself as a tourist destination should not focus only on tourism assets, the warm hospitality of its people or the unique traditions of its ethnic groups, because this is not what would attract American and Japanese IT companies to invest there (Anholt, 2005), it should be a combination of those tourism assets with progress in democracy and human rights, technology and infrastructures, and respect of the environment. Morocco has a story to tell to the world. It has to project an image that combines modernity and authenticity, a country of tolerance and coexistence, an image of a modern and progressive Morocco.

4.3.3. Relevance of Nation Brand to Morocco

Just like the commercial field where companies usually compete with each other for customers, nations use the same techniques to compete with other nations for their shares of the world's increasing numbers of tourists, investors, students, and immigrants. One of the

recent definitions of branding is given by the scholar Ying Fu (no date): “Nation branding is a process by which a nation’s images can be created, monitored, evaluated and proactively managed in order to improve or enhance the country’s reputation among a target international audience”.

Simon Anholt, the “father” of nation branding and who was the first to coin the concept of “nation brand” in 1996, rejects in one of his article the possibility of nation branding. He considers that country branding in the sense of looking good is just a “piece of housekeeping” which does not generate any new benefits. He gives as alternative the word ‘image’, and notes that:

...for a country to enhance its international image, it should concentrate on product development and marketing rather than the chimera of branding. There are no short cuts. Only a consistent, coordinated, and unbroken stream of useful, noticeable, world-class, and above all relevant ideas, products, and policies can, gradually, enhance the reputation of the country that produces them.

He summarizes the process in three main elements: strategy, substance and symbolic actions.

If we apply them to Morocco, we will have the following results:

Strategy: we need to determine an objective perception of ourselves as a Moroccan nation, and more importantly how people worldwide view our strengths and weaknesses. We can get answers by conducting large scale polls inside and outside of Morocco. Polling Moroccans, if done online, might not reflect the overall perception, as a large segment of population, especially old generations and rural inhabitants do not use internet widely, so they must be surveyed face-to-face. Questions they would be asked are for example: “How do you view Moroccans in general?”, “Which future do you wish for Morocco? And how do you think that should happen?”

As for the foreign audience, we can ask questions like: “what is the first idea that springs to your mind when you think of Morocco?”, “which three words describe Morocco?”, “can Morocco become the Capital of Tourism in Africa?”

Substance: it is about the diversified process of reforms taken by government and touching all aspects of life of its people, such as economy, politics, social care and so forth. In the case of Morocco, it can be the ascension of a democratically elected government to power and its commitment to nationwide reform.

Symbolic actions: are actions that communicate a will for change and reform. A good example for a Moroccan symbolic action: establishment of the Committee for Justice and Reconciliation aimed at healing the wounds of victims of the former regime and compensating them. But as Anholt (2005) noted, those actions should be designed for a tangible purpose; otherwise, it will be plain propaganda.

4.3. Branding Strategy

4.3.1. Limitations of Morocco's National Brand

The Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index is an efficient and comprehensive tool for measuring and managing a country's image. According to that index, the Branding Strategy of Morocco can be measured by combining the following six dimensions: Exports, Governance, Culture and Heritage, Tourism, Investment and Immigration.

If we try to apply that Index on Morocco, we will find that only three dimensions can be salient in this Nation Brand Index for Morocco: Culture and Heritage which is rich, diversified and deeply rooted in Morocco; tourism is considered the main asset of Morocco given the natural beauty of the country, and People which are known for being tolerant, open-minded and moderately religious.

On the other hand, the Kingdom has very limited products for export and we seldom see products with “made in Morocco” tag; the country is still struggling to reach a good governance; its attraction of foreign investments is very low; and except some individual cases, Morocco is definitely not the country that foreigners wish to settle in for living, working or studying.

That being said, there are also liberate obstacles resulting from the lack of efforts from the part of the government in facilitating foreigners visits to Morocco.

If we look at some of the top tourism destinations in the developing world such as Thailand, Turkey or Malaysia... they do not require visa from citizens of many nationalities, which make it easier for potential tourists to make up their minds when looking for a holiday destination. Personally, the first thing I think about when considering holidays is the visa, does that country require a visa or not? If it does not, I might consider it very seriously.

To this effect, the government should reconsider the visa exemptions for many nationalities of emerging countries. Because at the end, if we annoy the potential tourist with our bureaucratic system of visa formalities at our consular offices while still in his home country, he might already start building a negative image of the country he wants to visit.

This branding issue is so important that there is a need to establish a Brand Morocco Board which will play a leading role in developing an agenda for branding and will serve as an umbrella for all branding activities carried out by different sectors.

4.3.2. Establishment of Brand Morocco Board

4.3.2.1. Brand Morocco Board Composition

The Board should be chaired by a Moroccan expert in Public Relations and Marketing who has adequate experience in the international market.

The Board should consist of the following stakeholders:

1-The MFA: it will assume the role of rallying point of different branding activities, and coordinate with Morocco's foreign missions, embassies and consulate to make sure there is a two-way communication with them in terms of the branding strategy as designed at home and the situation from the perspective of the officers at the receiving country.

2-Ministries and government entities: their role is to support the country brand by providing know-how and technical support.

3-Media: will ensure timely communication of the branding initiatives to the public and harness their support.

4-Civil Society and NGOs: from different regions of Morocco, they will share with the Board how they want the image of their cultural groups to be marketed and ensure that the rights of each group are guaranteed in the branding activities.

5-Private Sector: they will provide the Board with financial and technical support in branding the country.

6- Moroccans in the Diaspora: they have to be actively involved in the Board by sharing their deep knowledge of the country of settlement, and by being good ambassadors of their home country overseas.

7-Board of Directors: it will follow up on the implementation of the Board goals and make sure that all stakeholders are involved.

8- Major cities: are those economic hubs such as Casablanca and Tangiers, and imperial towns such as Marrakech, Fes and Meknes. Representatives of these cities have to be involved in branding activities.

9-Chambers of Commerce and Industry: their role is to explore ways for branding Moroccan products and services which are highly appreciated and demanded by foreign publics, for example: handicraft, Moroccan Kaftan, Moroccan cuisine...etc.

4.3.2.2 Objectives of the Board

The objectives of Morocco Brand Board are to:

1. Enhance the sense of social harmony and patriotism among Moroccans.
2. Enhance uniqueness of Morocco's goods and services.
3. Promote Morocco as an attractive investment and tourism environment.
4. Promote soft assets such as sports, music, culture and cuisine.
5. Facilitate branding of the unique characteristics of towns, cities and places.
6. Inculcate the population with appreciation of environment and cleanliness
7. Improve the image of Morocco internally and externally.
8. Assist the businesses in branding their products and services.
9. Coordinate the branding efforts of different agencies and other stakeholders.
10. Seek funding and technical support.
11. Enforce good governance of the board.
12. Ensure operational efficiency and effectiveness of the board.
13. Involve leadership and legislative institutions to get full support for the branding strategy.

4.3.3. Advertising Campaigns

It is essential that Moroccan government sign publicity agreements with CNN and BBC to produce and broadcast three different ads about Morocco's tourism, its people, and its culture and heritage. During special occasions, our embassies in major countries should organize "Moroccan Days" with cultural performance, Moroccan food festival, Moroccan Kaftan show, Moroccan movies...etc. Choices must be well-informed. To be understood, Moroccan movies, when targeting Middle Eastern states for example, must be produced in a clear Moroccan dialect without making it too hard for the audience to grasp the meaning. Moreover, those movies should not contain indecent footages like it happened once in the U.A.E, and which only consecrates the negative stereotypes of the Moroccan woman.

The tourism private sector, in coordination with the Ministry of Tourism, is required to invest a lot of money and time in advertisements. They have to hire the most powerful marketing agencies, which can advertise their products widely on the internet, and through filmed commercials and promotional films.

The government must also tell the world how it enforced liberal laws for women, and that it is working very hard to enforce good governance, and show how socio-political reforms positively affected lives of the vulnerable categories such as women and children.

Morocco should build up on the assets it already has and the reputation it gained in the aftermath of the Arab Spring as a stable country, serious about reforms. Some big projects should be advertized and get the attention of the world, for example: the big project of solar energy which might turn the whole city of Ouarzazat into a solar city. This project is promising. Once completed, it must be widely advertised to show the people how we care about the climate and how creative we are. It can serve as a branding topic for that city. Same thing applies for other cities which have different attractions.

4.3.4. Online Reputation Management

I have tried a small experiment to see how many hits one can get about Morocco on the internet. My research was on Google, and in the way any tourist, foreign investor or researcher would do to learn about a country. I looked also at our direct neighbor Algeria to compare the results. The idea is not to compare both countries, but just to have a neighboring country as a benchmark. I put the term followed by “in Morocco” or “in Algeria”. The results were not really good.

Term	Morocco (Score by hits)	Algeria (Score by hits)
Prostitution	4.330.000	3.860.000
Witchcraft	3.850.000	3.230.000
Crime	115.000.000	70.400.000
Drugs	37.700.000	20.600.000
Corruption	17.300.000	18.400.000

Morocco has a relatively very high score in crime and drugs compared to Algeria.

Results for prostitution and witchcraft in Morocco show around 4 million hits for each term.

I have also looked up some positive terms for Morocco and results were promising:

Tourism in Morocco: 170.000.000 hits.

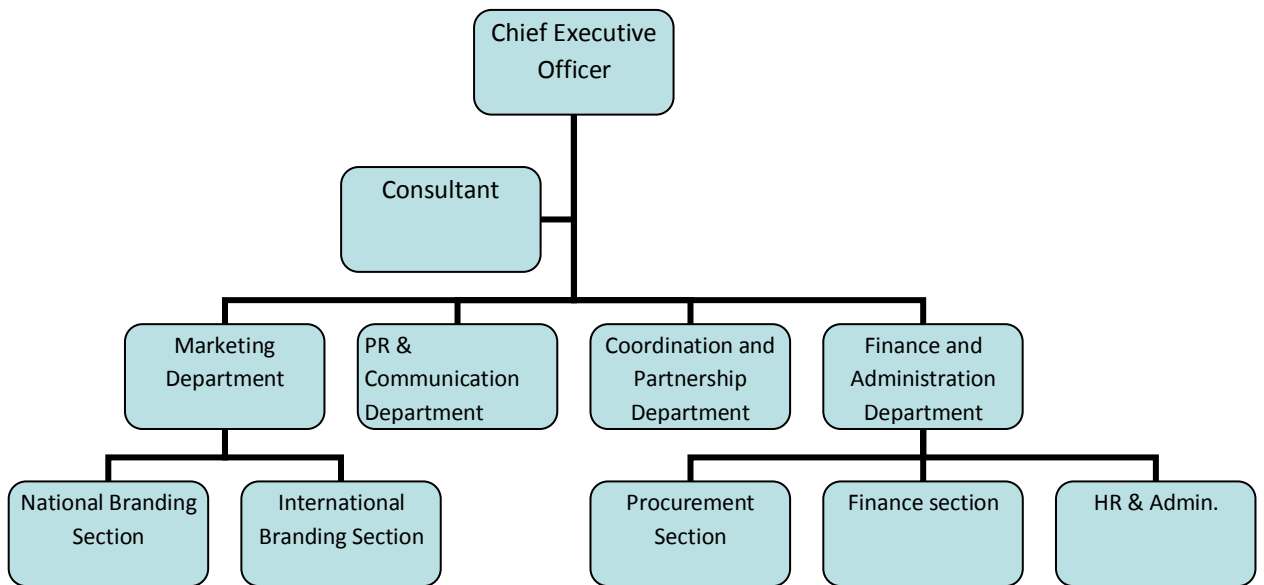
Kaftan Morocco: 549.000 hits (when put in French, results approached the double, which means work needs to tackle different languages).

Moroccan cuisine: 11.600.000 hits.

Albeit these results cannot be reliable and scientifically proved, they still reflect the reality in Morocco and the associated stereotypes, and contribute to boost the negative perceptions people nurture about Morocco.

Therefore, there is a need to hire a consulting firm specialized in online reputation management. Its role will be to build a positive online presence for Morocco by pushing down or removing any negative material that shows up in search results, and bringing colossal quality traffic to the forefront and top of search engines.

4.3.5. Proposed Organizational Chart for Morocco Brand Board



“The effectiveness of PD is measured
by minds changed, not dollars spent or
slick production packages”
Joseph S. Nye Jr

Chapter 5: Summary, evaluation and conclusions

5.1. Summary

This paper starts from the premise that today more than ever before, PD has become an imperative for small states which keep exploring all options for promoting their national interests and capturing the world’s attention.

I explained how Morocco has been undergoing fundamental reforms since the ascension of King Mohamed VI to the throne, and how the Arab Spring served as a driving force for further reforms touching on socio-political aspects of the ordinary citizens, redefining roles of non state-actors and empowering them to be part in the reforms. It is thanks to those reforms that Morocco has escaped the tide of bloody revolutions that swept across the Arab world and was praised by the U.S and the E.U. It is thanks to those reforms that Moroccans are enjoying more freedom and claiming more rights. It is thanks to those reforms that Morocco has become a role model in the region, presenting the exceptionality of being “different”.

We looked at some definitions of PD, and noticed than most of them reflect a western perspective, as the subject is not covered by the Arabic literature. But in general, definitions of the new PD focus on four actions: understanding, informing, engaging and influencing.

Influence is the end-product that any country should seek to achieve. The concept of PD for Morocco will seek, through its influence, to achieve economic development, correct negative stereotypes and make the country more visible.

I explained that Morocco has all the prerequisites but also opportunities for becoming a regional player should it only pursue a PD strategy. To avoid waste of resources, Morocco should have its PD focused on specific themes which are priorities of its foreign policy: advanced regionalization, the Maghreb Union, Africa, E.U and the Middle East.

We have examined some cases of PD in five different countries. From U.S. we learned that even with its diversified measures of PD, its image did not improve in the Muslim world, given its military interventions in few countries. Moral: PD can be a waste of time and resources if words do not match with policies on the ground.

As for Qatar, it is worthy to see how a combination of different means can work together for PD and nation brand. Mediation, humanitarian aid, hosting worldwide events, Qatar Airways...etc are invaluable assets for that oil rich tiny island; and more importantly it is the controversial channel Al-Jazeera that has put that island on the map thanks to the huge audience it attracts. Qatar's endeavors in the international scene were sometimes exaggerated and angered other bigger Arab states which felt sidelined. Moral: bold actions can be rewarding, but punching above its weight is not recommended.

Concerning Norway, it is a small, unthreatening, stable and peaceful country, which gives it more credibility than a hard power oriented country. However, the perception of Norway as an innocent and sleepy country, incapable of extremism has been affected in the aftermath of

the terrorist attack that killed 70 persons in July 2011, making Norway the world's top story.

Moral: it takes decades to build a strong brand, and only seconds to see it weakening.

Kenya, that poor African country, is working very hard to promote its national interests by attracting tourists and investors. All stakeholders seem to be on board, starting from the leadership. It has set up Brand Kenya Board, a costly project designed to brand the country, and which goes along with a serious vision 2030 of general development of the country. The government conducts an aggressive advertising campaign. Moral: investing in branding is worth the money and efforts even for poor states.

The final example was of the Maldives, a small island state, which has managed to capture attention of the world thanks to its well-engineered national brand campaigns. Its use of modern technologies for promoting the country as a touristic destination is very healthy, and its innovative approaches are worth capturing the attention: meeting under the water to sound the alarm on climate change, and a virtual embassy to interact with the rest of the world. Moral: PD is about being creative and bold.

We have seen that some actions have to be taken to pave the way for PD in Morocco. It has to start by opening up to ordinary citizens and communicating with them, and also with foreign governments to show them our will of change. Enhancing patriotic sense is also important as it will help to instill pride and confidence in citizens, making them admire themselves so that the world can admire them.

I tried to come up with a feasible strategy of PD and nation brand for Morocco. I proposed establishment of a PD Department presided by an Undersecretary for PD and PA who will be assisted by a team of advisors (academics and practitioners). PD and PA officers have to be

skillful career diplomats and should receive adequate training for their job from renowned Diplomatic Training Institutes.

The PD Department government will serve as a coordinator of fragmented activities of different governmental agencies and which pertain to PD, and on the other hand it will spearhead partnership with non state-actors.

As for funding, I proposed different sources of funding such as user fee, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, donations from the U.S and the E.U in addition to the Ministry's own funds.

This strategy should be implemented at first for one year in a certain order and measured at the end of the year to allow better adjustments.

We should also make use of the ICT which offers us today the possibility of participating in international relations at little cost. Digital Diplomacy has to be conducted along with the face-to-face PD, and a digital branding company should be hired to manage the reputation of Morocco on the internet.

A Brand Morocco Board has to be established as well and should serve as an umbrella for all branding activities conducted by different stakeholders. Its composition should consist of state and non state-actors who will join their activities together to exercise a better influence.

The paper cast some light on the role of citizens' diplomacy and how people to people exchange can help in breaking down misunderstanding and building bridges of friendship and trust, especially with citizens of Algeria, Europe, and the Middle East.

The project might face some objections, but the spectrum of representation will be inclusive with representatives of government agencies, private sector, NGOs, culture, arts, science, academia, sports...etc. Thus, they will have the possibility to witness first-hand the progress of this process and see how realistic and promising it can be.

5.2. Evaluation

Obviously, PD has to be measured for us to know if it is worth the resources and time we invest in it or not. And as PD revolves around four elements: understanding, informing, engaging and influencing, we can measure its influence on multipliers of opinions, on the general populations and on the governments. By establishing data of exchange programs with the target countries, and watching the progress of these programs over the years, we can determine if foreign publics are still interested in those programs or not, and if the number of participants increases or decreases. By measuring the influence we are having on multipliers of opinions in target countries over the years, for example journalists, we can see if there is any improvement in the way they cover news of our country in their mass media. By constantly following discussions related to our country's foreign policies on social media networks by the youth, we can measure if our PD achieves any change in their perception of our foreign policies.

In addition to measurement of PD efforts, we have to measure national brand efforts on a yearly basis. Here are some of the techniques that can be used:

- 1- Number of times the name of Morocco has been mentioned in the press of target countries. Analyze the context in which the name was mentioned, and decide whether it is positive or negative.

- 2- Monitor conversations about Morocco in online platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube...etc. We can use tools like Radian6, an online company that can do the hard work of data gathering and analysis and give us easy-to-read and actionable results.
- 3- Measure the number of tourists who visit Morocco and determine which cities they visited the most, activities they did, hotels they stayed in and restaurants they frequented.
- 4- Measure the number of foreign investments in Morocco, type and size of their investments.
- 5- Sales of Moroccan brand products and services.
- 6- Check how Morocco brand has performed over the year in the Nation Brand Index.

5.3. Conclusions

Some of the challenges that many countries face and that Morocco might face as well are:

- Non state actors are most of the time driven by their own agendas and it might be hard to keep them on the same page with the government.
- Objections from society which would consider the project as a waste of badly needed financial resources.
- Bad news travel faster. This saying applies to countries image as well. An image might need involvement of all stakeholders and years of work for the country to earn that image, but one person only (for example: terrorist) with one bad move can affect that good reputation. This leads us to the conclusion that countries cannot fully control their image, whatever they do.
- The bar is placed very high because of the aggressive public diplomacy advances made by China which is challenging even U.S.'s PD, in addition to India, South Africa and Brazil.

Here are some recommendations for conducting PD and nation brand in Morocco:

- PD is not propaganda. So a meticulous attention should be paid to the content of the message we seek to convey to the foreign audiences.
- PD starts at home. It entails boosting of the national identity and establishing harmony between different segments of society. If domestic constituency is not supporting the mainstream foreign policy of the government, there will be no credibility for such foreign policy.
- Brand Morocco is more about concrete reforms than just advertising campaigns. It is question of engaging in serious reforms and telling the world about them.
- It is imperative to seek advice of a nation brand consultant who can help in the first beginnings of the brand board.
- All stakeholders involved in Brand Morocco should send unified messages about Morocco to avoid confusing foreign audiences with different messages.
- Diaspora is a key element for success of nation brand as they are citizen ambassadors of Morocco in their countries of settlement.
- Use of new technologies is paramount for PD and image management. Diplomats should interact with the rest of the world through online platforms which are only increasing in importance.
- PD means different things in different contexts. Thus, it is important to avoid sending the wrong message when trying to reach out to the rest of the world, for example: you cannot correct the image of the Moroccan woman in the Gulf region when your brand is a movie that has relatively indecent footages.

- PD and nation brand are long-term processes, they require fortitude and persistence before starting to pay off.
- The government should encourage joint artistic activities and movies between Moroccans and other nationals from the Middle East to make Moroccan dialect more understandable, and should encourage Moroccans to make a little effort and speak as clearly as possible.
- Diplomats, starting from the minister, should take English language classes, and not be content of Arabic and French only.
- PA officers posted at the home capital have to keep their ears to the ground and whenever there is an opportunity for working with any governmental, semi-governmental or private agency on PD; they should get aggressively involved in it and spin the message in a positive, clear and transparent way.
- Support for PD and nation brand should come from the highest authorities of Morocco.
- Transparency should be ensured at all stages of the project to allow everybody to understand the vision of the government, hence help as far as he is concerned.
- Measures to enforce environment respect should be taken, as countries that show no respect for the environment seem to lose their attractiveness.
- The Moroccan government has to gamble on its creativity to come up with some captivating projects in which he would be a pioneer in the region, for example: branding the city of Ouarzazate as the city of renewable energy; or supporting NGOs operating in certain sensitive domains such as women protection.
- Investment in PR campaigns should be limited, the real investment has to be in infrastructure, human rights, education and economic development

- Citizen diplomacy is of key importance and should be widely supported by the government. Citizens should be educated on how to behave in a civilized way both inside and outside of Morocco, and encouraged to learn about foreign cultures and languages.
- Education on protocol and etiquette is good for the country image. If our Prime Minister does not handle interviews with international channels properly and the entire world watches him, it is Morocco's image that will be affected.
- The MFA should work on visa exemptions for further countries to encourage potential tourists and investors.
- Both the government and people should maintain cleanliness of the public areas. Public toilets are badly needed and should be maintained clean.
- We cannot please all the people all the time, yet we should keep feeling proud of who we are.
- We should live our country brand honestly so that it will be projected convincingly and deliberately.

At the end, we are one nation and have one destiny as such. We should stick together and forget our divergences and differences when it comes to our national interests. We should encourage each other towards more achievements that will shape our national interests and image. We have to tell our story to the world and make others more receptive of our foreign policies and image.

When more countries of the world become understanding and favorable of our foreign policies, our PD will be in the right path. When children from other countries come to stay with Moroccan families and experience first-hand our life, new positive perceptions will start shaping and the negative stereotypes of Morocco will perish in time. When our athletes raise

the flag of Morocco in international competitions, the rating of Morocco brand will rise. When our country attracts more and more tourists, Morocco's brand will gain in prominence.

It is up to the government to decide whether to implement this roadmap or any similar strategy, but to keep the status quo will not benefit anybody. Should the government launch a PD strategy, it has to enjoy the whole-nation consensus (just as their consensus on the Sahara). And since it is a national cause, its implementation has to continue regardless of governments change.

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Appendix

Survey on Morocco's Nation Brand

Dear respondent, please answer these questions honestly with the first ideas that spring to your mind.

1- Are you interested in visiting Morocco for holidays?

Yes Maybe No

2- Do you think Morocco can be the capital of tourism in North Africa?

Yes Maybe No

3- Do you think Morocco is a unique country?

Yes Maybe No

4- Do you know any Moroccan cities you would consider imperial?

5- On a scale of 1 to 10, how safe do you think Morocco is?

6- In your opinion, what are the three adjectives that best describe Morocco?

7- Do you know any Moroccan brand products or services? If yes, please specify.

8- How would you describe Moroccan people?

9- Are you interested in Moroccan culture and heritage?

Yes Maybe

10- Do you think Moroccans care about environment?

Yes Maybe

11- Do you know about the reforms pursued so far by the Moroccan regime?

Yes No

12- Would you recommend Morocco for tourists?

Yes Maybe No

13- Would you recommend Morocco for investors?

Yes Maybe No

14- Would you recommend Morocco for living?

Yes Maybe No

15- If Morocco invites you to join “Friends of Morocco Association”, would you agree?

Yes Maybe No

List of Respondents to the survey

Sr#	Name	Nationality
1	Abdulwahab Abdulkhaleq	Eritrea
2	Abdussalam Luqman	Pakistan
3	Abulhussein Khamis Ali	Sudan
4	Anna Durante	British Virgin Islands
5	Asharf Hattia	South Africa
6	Georgette Verraghen	Belgium
7	Jerry Noland	U.S
8	Kai Brima	Sierra Leone
9	Mary Murphy	Ireland
10	Luciana Albert	Spain
11	Philippe Vergnes	France
12	Rafika Lkhchakhche	Algeria
13	Rashida Kalpas	U.K
14	Sadieka Richard	South Africa
15	Irina Limanova	Russia
16	Youssuf Al Ketiri	U.A.E