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**SPAIN AND THE HISPANICS:
A STRATEGIC PROJECT**

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Summary: This report provides specific suggestions as to how the various Spanish institutions can proceed in their dealings with the diverse, dynamic, growing and ever-changing Hispanic community in the US. The presence of Hispanics is growing at an accelerating pace on the political, cultural, artistic, media and economic scenes of the –for now– sole global superpower. The tightening of ties between Spain and the US Hispanic community can take place at several levels, including the political, the educational-cultural and the economic

Preliminary Considerations

The Hispanics of the United States have historically received little attention from either the Spanish government or Spanish society. This lack of relevance or presence of Hispanics in the Spanish mind is not strange, for the simple reason that their profile in the US was, until very recently, relatively undefined. And this was so even though significant numbers of Latin Americans have been settling in the US since the middle of the last century –what Carlos Fuentes has called ‘the silent reconquest’–. Only in this last decade has the perception –and the scale– of things Hispanic begun to change. It was when Clinton was re-elected in 1996 that electoral analysts began examining with new eyes a group that did not seem to previously exist in its own right. Until that year it had been –if anything– a negative reference in electoral campaigns where the promise of a hard line in dealing with Hispanic immigrants was a factor designed to attract the conservative Republican vote. The change of century and millennium modified that apparent lack of importance, especially since the 2000 Census, which was the first to recognise the demographic, sociological, cultural, political and economic potential of the until then less-than-defined Hispanic community. Roberto Suro, Director of the Pew Hispanic Center, says very descriptively that to all public effects Hispanics have gone from being a footnote to a paragraph in contemporary US history and are on their way to becoming a major chapter.

Until a few years ago, the Hispanic world was an unknown that no one in Spain had proposed to reveal because it was undervalued or unknown as a demographically and sociologically identifiable group. In the United States itself, until very recent decades, reference was made to Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Dominicans, Chicanos or Mexicans –the main places of origin–. This divided and fragmented the value of the group as a whole, described by the generic term ‘Latin Americans’ or ‘Latinos’ for short. The first formal, common definition for them all did not come until the census of 1970, which used and generalized the term ‘Hispanic’. This led it to be considered a bureaucratic term, supposedly thought up by Anglos at the Census Office itself. This supposition has hindered its widespread acceptance, since it is assumed that both as a noun and an adjective it veiled the pejorative intention to homogenise the different national origins,

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deliberately impoverishing their diversity and original richness. In fact, the term was invented at meetings of an *ad hoc* Committee on Ethnic and Racial Definitions of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, then led by Caspar Weinberger. Its intellectual author was a very young civil servant of Mexican origin, Gracia Flores-Hughes, who felt the generic name Latino was wrong or unnecessarily broad, since it included Italians. Little by little, both terms have been introduced on an equal basis in the mass media, politics and the arts. Although strictly speaking the term Hispano/Latino may be applied only to those who are of Latin American origin and also US citizens, a broader definition can be used for analytical purposes: ‘Hispano/a’ and ‘Latino/a’ refer to persons of Latin American or Spanish-speaking Caribbean origin who live, work and reside in the US, whether as citizens, aspiring citizens, holders of green cards (which are no longer green) or temporary immigrants –that is, all those whom the US Census has counted as Hispanic–.

The fact is that Hispanics were to a great extent responsible for the 2000 Census having an exceptional repercussion in the academic and administrative world, as well as in media and political circles. The Census (which since mid-century has been updated each decade) revealed several unexpected facts. Apart from establishing that the total population was higher than expected (rising from 248 million to 281 million inhabitants –the largest jump in the past three decades–), it showed that demographic growth had been exceptionally intense among new groups of immigrants, especially Hispanics and Asians, who had contributed substantially to the increase in population. This was especially true of the Hispanic community, which had grown at a rate four times higher than the national average. But the potential for demographic growth continues: while the Census of 2000 reported 35.3 million Hispanics, this figure rose to 37.4 million in 2002 and to 39.9 million in July 2003 –an increase of 13%, compared with the national average of 3%, and 4% growth among the black population–. This irreversibly makes Hispanics the largest minority in the United States –nearly 14% of the total population–, overtaking Afro-Americans. Taking a broad view of Hispanics, in addition to the nearly 40 million in the continental US, we could add the nearly four million inhabitants of the Free Associated State of Puerto Rico. And this does not include the 7.5 million undocumented immigrants (the figure given in the survey by the demographer Jeffrey Passel of the Urban Institute).

This demographic result has forced continuous changes to be made to the population distribution map, including important ones in terms of the concentration and location of minorities. Furthermore, according to Moctezuma Esparza (until recently president of the New American Alliance, one of most prominent Hispanic entrepreneurial organisations), the extreme youth of the Hispanic population makes it especially significant, since although Hispanics represent about 14% of the total population, they are nearly 25% of the active population and, if only the major urban areas are counted, they may be nearly a third of the workforce.

From our perspective, the natural question is what these varied and striking data mean for Spain, not only given the fact that the United States has become the sixth-largest Spanish-speaking country in the world, after Mexico, Colombia, Spain, Argentina and Venezuela (the 2000 Census identified 28.1 million people who spoke Spanish regularly), but also given the evidently expansive force of the Hispanic community as a structural component of the world’s hegemonic society at the start of the third millennium in this globalised world.

As an introduction to this issue, it is first necessary to have a rigorous understanding of the elements that constitute the Hispanic community in the United States. It is essential to correct the mistaken stereotype of a monolithic world with interests that are fully shared, interchangeable and coinciding. The Hispanic community is not only multifaceted due to its origin, but also has continuously changing dynamics. Jorge Luis Borges's simile of the multi-dimensional chess board has often been used to try to visualise the complexity of the Hispanic world, distinguishing three levels or strata that must be included in the analytic strategy. The first involves belonging to a shared culture, expressed essentially in Spanish (although 89.6% of those born in the US, and 52% of those born outside, speak and express themselves 'very well' in English), reflecting cohesively homogeneous values. The second level involves their different national origins, Mexico being dominant, with 67%, followed by significant numbers from Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Central America and the Andean countries. And the third level involves their different degree of integration in society, according to whether they belong to the first, second or third generation of immigrants: the first generation is basically Spanish-speaking and economically weak; the second is practically bilingual, with average family of income in the bracket of 30,000-50,000 dollars/year (forming the backbone of the community, since in 2020 they will contribute nearly 47% of the growth in the Hispanic community, compared with 28% contributed by the third generation and 25% by the first –see *The Rise of the Second Generation: Changing Patterns in Hispanic Population Growth*, Pew Hispanic Center–); and the third generation is two thirds English-speaking and 32% Protestant, with medium/high income. At the same time, this reality is adapting ever more quickly to its surrounding context. For example, according to forecasts by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, women's access to the labour force will grow by 48% between 1998 and 2008, rising from 5.7 million to 8.5 million.

Based on these figures, some initial conclusions can be drawn:

- (1) It is conspicuously clear –though not yet to Spanish society– that the reality of the Hispanic community is plural, complex and asymmetrical. The Hispanic community does not exist as a homogeneous entity or uniform body, either ethnically or racially. The initial data indicates that this is an exceptionally dynamic social reality that modifies the data that define it in very short periods of time at an accelerating pace. This makes it necessary to update our analyses and predictions of trends. In fact, as we have seen, even the demographic size of the Hispanic community changes with surprising speed. This changeable, variable nature tends to be perpetuated by its constant shifts from one situation to another, which in turn is the result of the continuity of a migratory wave determined by proximity and easy transport. Other migrations have had a beginning and an end: the European ones from the 19th century through to the mid-20th century –made up mainly of German, Irish, English, Italians, French, Poles and Scandinavians– all exhausted themselves, as did the Jewish wave, which at the start of the 20th century made up 30% of the population of New York. This is not the case of the Latin America emigration, which is hemispheric in scope, not trans-Atlantic, and is the result of a new 'emigration chain', which paradoxically results from the increasing difficulty in crossing borders: instead of returning periodically to their countries of origin to visit their families, they end up bringing their closest family members to them. This intrinsic and constant change –which is constantly increasing– is accompanied by changes in the traditional geographical destinations: in 1990, 33% of Hispanics resided in California, whereas today only 22% do; the other 11% have moved to Arkansas, Missouri, North Carolina, Nebraska and

other states of the Union –contradicting one of Huntington’s hypotheses on the immutability of settlement–. Even so, it is true that the ‘minority’ concept is breaking down, given the concentration of people in certain locations: projections at the state level indicate that in California in 2040, of 51.5 million inhabitants, 25.9 million will be Hispanics, and that within ten years in Los Angeles county, there will be 5.3 million Hispanics –50% of the population–. In Texas they now make up over a third of the population (35.4%) and in Houston they account for 40% of the urban census.

- (2) From a pragmatic perspective, the key question is how to put together a coherent project, tactically and strategically significant, for relations between Spain and the United States, bearing in mind the latter’s Hispanic reality and assuming that this community –from the perspective of shared interests– can act as a unique interface and privileged interlocutor with the rich and complex American society. This special proximity is based on the fact that Hispanics are a historical-cultural group with significant ties not only to Spain, but also to Europe. Their place of origin –Latin America– was referred to by Alain Rouquie as the Far West, unquestionably differentiating Hispanics from other significant minorities (Afro-Americans, Asians and Native Americans).

In other words, the crucial issue is how to deal with and relate to the active, variable and changing Hispanic reality in the US, based on the assumption that approaching the Hispanic community means approaching the United States. We must always keep in mind that Hispanics and the US cannot be analysed as two dissociable entities. What’s more, without the US there can be no Hispanics, since Hispanic society and issues form a conceptual category within American society.

- (3) It is never superfluous to insist on essential caution: relations between Spain –as a society and as a State– and the Hispanic community are not without risks and complications. Spanish proposals should be free of any idea of instrumentality, while setting out to establish complicities that could suggest even the least doubt of this community’s loyalty to the United States –the country that has taken them in– would be a serious strategic error. We would be committing a fatal error if, as a result of sharing centuries of (often conflictive) history with Hispanics and expressing ourselves in the same language and sharing values and culture, we proposed –or seemed to be proposing– dual loyalties. The appropriate response would be one of irritation both on the part of the Hispanics and of the United States as a whole. This would be made still worse if the belligerent and alarmist Huntington thesis took root socially. The author of the ‘Clash of Civilizations’ says that Hispanics are the biggest challenge to the traditional American identity. In his recent book, *Who are We?*, Huntington maintains that ‘the single most immediate and most serious challenge to America’s traditional identity comes from the immense and continuing immigration from Latin America, especially Mexico’. Therefore, when we speak of approaching the Hispanics, we must clarify that this means approaching the United States. The metaphors of one country within another –the ‘second largest Latin American country’– are, if not inappropriate, then certainly full of risk. Additional complications may arise from antagonisms or conflicts between communities. Huntington, in his final analysis, not only provides a catalogue of stereotypes and misunderstandings, but also a manual/guide/handbook to the WASP’s nest (pardon the pun). Spanish actions that could be construed as attempts to strengthen the identity of the Hispanic community and slow their integration into American society (education, language learning, joint cultural and economic projects)

may not be viewed sympathetically in the Anglo-Protestant world. Beyond making a simple fuss, the professor from Boston has renewed and updated –from the academic perspective– earlier movements distrustful of Hispanic immigration. This is part of the ‘nativist’ creed: the ‘English only’ movement, Proposition 187 and the Dole/Buchanan campaign of 1996, which advocate stricter treatment of immigrants, are very recent examples of the antagonism and fear of the possible subsistence of cultures outside the mainstream, with structural difficulties –either voluntary or involuntary– that hinder their blending into the melting pot. This distrust appears not to be lessened by repeated affirmations by Hispanics that they do not intend to use their increasing power to distance themselves from the sociological centre of the United States, but rather to integrate in it, taking part in the creation of a common vision. It should be noted that in the field of academic analysis, Huntington is neither the only one to reach these conclusions, nor an isolated precursor. Victor Diaz Hanson –professor of classical studies and small farmer– in his essay *Mexifornia, a State of Becoming* (2003), blames failure to assimilate on ‘affirmative action’ and on Californians themselves, who use and abuse illegal labour. He ends up describing the situation in terms of collective suicide. And Henry Kamen, ambiguously assesses the Huntington thesis and refers to the Hispanics as ‘the iceberg of the Titanic’. Francis Fukuyama provides more details in his globally appreciative analysis of the Huntington thesis and although he affirms that Mexican immigration should not be feared –they are Christians, have adopted the work ethic that is the essential modern value remaining of the Protestant ethic, and marry in acceptable percentages outside their group– he also seems convinced that ‘the thoughtless promotion of multiculturalism and identity politics threatens important American values’.

The Catalogue of Actions

Having reached this point, we must inevitably ask that classic pragmatic question with historical resonance: What should we do? An initial, elementary step –essential at the practical level– is not only to understand the Hispanic reality to a reasonable degree, but also to make Spanish society as a whole aware of this reality. In political, academic, business and cultural circles today, there is an exceptionally low level of understanding, allied with a confused appreciation of things Hispanic, which leads to a simplistic and simplifying vision that is very often inaccurate. There has been little intellectually rigorous analysis of the Hispanic reality, very little serious consideration of such study, and practically no long-term educational work done to spread its results. And with certain exceptions –essentially arising from civil society– it cannot be affirmed that there have been initiatives specifically aimed at Hispanics, nor any foreign policy –in the broad sense of the term– deliberately focused on Hispanics or intentionally designed to favour closer ties with this community.

We will now give specific suggestions as to how the various Spanish institutions can proceed in their dealings with this diverse, dynamic, growing and ever-changing community, whose presence is growing at an accelerating rate on the political, cultural, artistic, media and economic scenes of the –for now– sole global superpower. This tightening of ties can take place at several levels: political, educational-cultural and economic. Let us examine them critically in this order.

Political

Simon Rosenberg, president of the New Democratic Network, an electoral organisation that supports the Democratic Party, while recently explaining the resources that both

parties have used to court the Hispanic vote in recent campaigns (1996, 2000 and 2004), said that ‘more than any other group, the Hispanics will be critical in defining the American political panorama this year and in future years’. While remaining prudent and tactically cautious, it is clear that we, the Spanish, have a real interest in getting to know and developing relationships with the political leaders of the Hispanic community –with the men and women who make up ‘Hispanic Power’ in the US– although two things are essential to avoid dangerous misunderstandings that would be politically counterproductive: first, making it clear that we are involved with Hispanic leaders in their role as US politicians, as protagonists on the general American scene; and, secondly, maintaining absolutely scrupulous neutrality in regard to the Hispanic community’s preferred options and the political scenarios in which it chooses to act. If a Spanish person or the Spanish media were to become involved in the internal politics of the United States, recommending specific options, this could amount to costly meddling and a strategic blunder.

It is important to determine who the interlocutors and protagonists are on each side, since not all of them are obvious. On the Spanish side, various and diverse players may legitimately participate in the deliberate attempt to increase mutual understanding and contacts with the political world that represents the Hispanic community. At the top is the Royal House itself, which is already involved in relations characterised by their historical-political potential. On official visits by the King and Queen in recent years, these relations have been discrete but effective, establishing contacts with various Hispanic political leaders. On their visit in 2001, their stops and itinerary make their intentions explicit: Dallas, Jackson (Mississippi), San Agustín and Miami. For his part, Prince Felipe has left hints of things to come on his visits to the US. In 1989, he visited Santa Fe, Austin and Houston. In 1994, in Chicago, he inaugurated the exhibition *Journey Through Spain*. In 1999 he participated in the foundation of the *Cátedra Príncipe de Asturias* (professorship) at the University of Georgetown, and in 2000 he was in New Mexico, where a project was underway to establish a National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque, where a Cervantes Institute is now housed. On his official visit in 2003, his programme included contacts with representatives of the Hispanic community and in October 2004 –with the new Princess of Asturias– he met with Bill Richardson, governor of New Mexico, before laying the first stone of the enlarged Hispanic Center in Albuquerque. Then, in Washington, he met with young Hispanic leaders who have visited Spain in the framework of a programme designed by the Spain-US Council Foundation.

In the Spanish government, it has been the Prime Minister who has taken the initiative in recent years. In 2003, the president at the time visited Miami, California, New Mexico and Texas, and contacts with Hispanic leaders were planned on his visits to Washington, DC. It would not be inappropriate for ministers and high officials to take similar initiatives. Other political leaders at other levels of government could also do the same: presidents of autonomous communities, mayors of twinned cities (Madrid and New York; Miami/Dade and Ibiza, Tenerife and Valencia; and Kansas City and Seville).

There are broad areas for potential contact with Hispanic political figures in the American presidentialist system. Hispanic figures appear sporadically, but with increasing frequency in the federal executive. In the first term of the Bush administration, Alberto F. González was Legal Counsel to the White House and Adam Chavarría directed the *White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans*. Members of the second Bush cabinet include Alberto F. González –who has become the first Hispanic Attorney

General–, while Carlos Gutiérrez has been appointed Secretary of Commerce. Previously, Laura Cavazos was Secretary of Education, Henry Cisneros was Secretary of Commerce, Rosario Marín headed the Treasury, Federico Peña was Secretary of Transport, Bill Richardson was in charge of Energy, and Mel Martínez, who is now a Florida senator, was Housing and Urban Development Secretary. The influential federal agencies are another of the power centres where Hispanic administrators can be found. This is the case of Héctor Barreto and Aída Álvarez in the Small Business Administration, and is often the case in the Federal Office of Minority Health.

In a federal state as extreme as the United States, the executive powers of the individual states must not be overlooked. We have already mentioned that Bill Richardson is now governor of New Mexico and there are noteworthy cases of power exercised by Hispanics in local government. These include Henry Cisneros as mayor of San Antonio, and others in Manhattan (Ferrer and Adolfo Carrión), in Denver and in Los Angeles (Antonio Villarraigosa).

It seems that in Spain there is not full awareness of the decision-making power of legislators in US politics. A US senator or congressman, especially if he or she is on one of the relevant committees, has an enormous capacity to generate political action. The peculiarity of the system is such that for the embassies –all of them– it is nearly impossible to maintain direct contact with members of the legislatures, since this is interpreted as an attempt to meddle in internal affairs. This is why parliamentary diplomacy (and the various lobbies) makes particular sense. It is more than obvious that Spanish legislators should make efforts to approach Hispanic members of Congress.

The body of elected Hispanics inclines toward the Democrats –56.7%, compared with 18.7% Republicans, according to a recent survey by the *Washington Post* and the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute– with 20% independents, although it is said that the Hispanics are the most conservative Democrats and the most Democratic conservatives, both words being defined in terms of the peculiar dividing lines of the two big parties. However, the latest elections have proved right those who have insisted that neither of the two parties can take for granted that the Hispanic vote belongs to them. In the 2004 elections Hispanics were 9% of registered voters and according to the National Association of Elected Latinos and Appointed Officials (NALEO), 6.9 million voted, representing 6.1% of the electorate, although they did not play the critical role that *a priori* was attributed to them in the various swing states that decided the presidency. Even so, this critical mass explains the Democratic campaign that spent 20 million dollars to register new Hispanic voters, and the 13 million dollars spent on electoral advertising in Spanish –four times more than in 2000–. One of the most veteran political organisations that represent Hispanics politically (the League of United Latin American Citizens, LULAC) has demanded that campaigns aimed at Hispanics –whether in Spanish or in English– be focused on the main interests of the Hispanic voter: employment, health, education, family, migratory conditions and relations with Latin America; terrorism, so-called moral values and the war in Iraq also had significant weight in the electoral battle in 2004. The fact is that exit polls offered unexpected results to President Bush, who managed to get between 40% and 44% (according to which survey) of the Hispanic vote, compared with 35% in the 2000 election, while Kerry got 53%, well below the 62% obtained by Al Gore in the previous presidential campaign. As a result, in the new legislature that starts with Bush's re-election, there will be 23 Hispanics members (one more than in the previous legislature, and more than double the 11 members of 1990). There will be 19 Democrats in the

Hispanic Caucus, while the Congressional Hispanic Conference will bring together the Republican legislators. Until the 2004 election there were no Hispanic senators (the political aristocracy), but this time there will be two, Mel Martínez, a Republican from Florida, and Ken Salazar, a Democrat from Colorado. In the state legislatures in 2004, Hispanics occupied 158 seats as congress members and 59 as senators.

The judicial authority is an interesting component of politics in the United States, where there have been periods when the expression ‘government of the judges’ could truly be applied. It must also be kept in mind that in the US positions of judicial power are reached through the electoral process and political nomination. The missions of relations and contacts between Spanish judges and magistrates and their Hispanic counterparts is of special interest in this context. And if President Bush manages to overcome the objections of Democrats, he will eventually appoint Miguel Estrada as the first Hispanic to occupy a seat in the Supreme Court.

In conclusion, deliberate efforts to establish relations with Hispanic politicians –in the Administration, in the legislatures and in the judiciary– are at a very incipient stage. When the demographic, economic, social and cultural weight of Hispanics gradually begins to shift to politics, it can objectively be concluded that there are good and powerful reasons to make a conscious effort to approach, get to know and maintain contact with the Hispanic political class.

Cultural/educational

Contrary to common belief, there is potential for conflict in this area too. This is especially clear in education, to the extent that multiculturalism is interpreted as aggression against national identity, and bilingualism as a factor of resistance to integration in the melting pot. What can Spain do with the Hispanic community in the cultural and educational terrain without getting stuck in the quicksand predicted by Huntington? We will make a distinction between educational and cultural activities, examining actions now underway, as well as possible projects.

Education

Several programmes have been implemented by the Spanish administration that are aimed at the United States and, though not specifically focused on Hispanics, do in fact primarily involve them, if only unintentionally. Among these is the Visiting Teachers Program, which was created due to the fact that in secondary schools –many with a high proportion of Hispanics– there is an unsatisfied demand for teachers. Structured by common agreement with private schools and public education systems in various states of the Union, the programme’s immediate goal is to put 2,000 teachers into the American education system. There are now about 1,200 and this figure is holding steady, with about 500 teachers hired annually –although post-9/11 migratory difficulties led to barely 300 teachers being hired for the 2003/04 school year (this reduction corresponds to the reduction in the income of American universities, where foreign student registration dropped by 30%, as a direct result of stricter processing and granting of visas)–.

Among the projects on the design table is the possibility of establishing *Spanish Academies* for the 2005/06 school year –schools of academic excellence covering from kindergarten to grade 12–. These would be totally bilingual and would grant dual certificates (Spanish/American). This responds to a demand for dual Spanish/English teaching through dual immersion, given the clearly dominant demand and preference in

universities for the study of Spanish language and literature over other second language options.

The formal creation of a ‘Spanish Diploma in Foreign Language’ (*Diploma Español en Lengua Extranjera –DELE–*) as an official diploma in Spanish, valid worldwide (like the TOEFL certificate in English or the DELF in French), issued by the Instituto Cervantes, is another of the measures not specifically aimed at American Hispanics but which could have an impact on the general strategy for approaching them. This effect could be accentuated as the result of the signing in June 2004 of an agreement between the Cervantes Institute and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México –the giant among Latin America universities– to train professors and to jointly validate a single Spanish diploma.

There is no bursaries programme specifically aimed at Hispanics. The Fundación Carolina (which in 2004 granted 1,199 bursaries –an increase of 113%–) is aimed preferentially at students from ‘the Ibero-American Community of Nations’. Providing university grants would have a limited cost as there is excess capacity in Spanish universities. The MAEC-AECI grants are available to all possible applicants, but have not managed to attract –as far as we know– a minimal number of Hispanics, whether due to a lack of promotion or to ignorance or lack of interest.

The creation of a bursary for excellence has been proposed several times. This would be a high-level grant based on a rigorous selection process that could acquire the same prestige as the British Rhodes Scholarships. If the project were to be carried out, consideration could be given to leaving the competition open to all US students with a certain level of proficiency in Spanish, which would generally favour Hispanic students.

One idea that would face understandable difficulties would be to cooperate in special literacy programmes for first-generation immigrants. The proposal was initially made by Mexican educators at New York University (NYU), arguing that the experience acquired by the Spanish International Cooperation Agency (AECI) in its bilingual teaching programmes in several Andean countries could be particularly useful. Apart from having to overcome the difficulties presented by Spanish legislation, which limits the allocation of cooperation funds to countries that are on the list of the OECD’s Development Aid Committee, this could also very well meet resistance from the US government –and very likely even from the Mexican government–.

Contemporary Spanish culture, taught in Spanish, is very poorly represented in the powerful US university system, despite the fact that all the big universities have departments of Spanish language and literature, in most cases headed by Hispanic professors and, in some cases, by Spaniards. A possibly profitable strategy would be to design a programme whose goal is to replace old-fashioned Hispanic studies of a reductionist and historic nature, and promote active presence in areas of research and teaching that relate to modern Spanish-speaking culture. Following a common practice in the most prestigious academic centres in the United States, we should also set out to establish an effective relationship between culture/art and the consumer market/services, aimed at globalised citizens who understand the Hispanic world as a post-national space. Academic researchers would be associated with the cultural industries, as is now the case in the big universities in the area of scientific and technological research. This would give prestige to contemporary Spanish-language culture and would add economic value to the

language in the communication/information society *par excellence*, in an operation that would require the complicity and participation of Hispanics. Departments of Hispanic studies would not be based fundamentally on the notion of a foreign language, but rather as centres for a new concept of the humanities, in which the Spanish language and Hispanic cultures are a central part. This would involve forming a corps of Hispanic/Spanish professors through agreements among universities. This proposal –which would undoubtedly be attractive to the Hispanic academic community– has in fact been developed by a Hispanic of Cuban origin, Professor Román de la Campa, Head of the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature at Stony Brook, State University of New York (SUNY). Yale University has also indicated that it would be interested in a pilot project along these same lines.

At the same time, initiatives that now operate only at the Latin American level could be broadened. The inclusion of American universities and colleges in the Universia project (www.universia.net) is already being explored. This project, promoted by the SCH bank, has put in place agreements linking 724 universities in ten countries (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Spain, Mexico, Peru, Portugal, Puerto Rico and Venezuela) as partners in the portal developed in each country. It sets out to disseminate information on universities and promote the development of new technologies applied to education, educational/technological innovation, and platforms for educational and inter-university communication. This would be a way of reaching the American university world (where 750,000 students study Spanish as a second language), linking the various actors in a network that would undoubtedly create beneficial synergy and exchanges on the global scene in which the Hispanic world participates. The City College of New York would be a very appropriate candidate (nearly 60% of its students are Hispanics), as would the University of Miami and Notre Dame University –the latter leads a consortium of 18 research centres that look into Hispanic issues in a programme called *Inter-University Program for Latino Research*– and, in general, all those university institutions where Hispanic presence is especially significant.

Culture

Given the size of the United States, the operational capacity of official institutions with cultural missions is painfully insignificant. There are nine consulates on US soil, almost all in cities or states with a large Hispanic presence: New York, Washington DC, Boston, Miami, Houston, New Orleans, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco, plus San Juan (Puerto Rico) and a cultural office in the Spanish embassy. All suffer from a manifest scarcity of means, both economic and personal. Although this scarcity is a structural fault of the Foreign Service, it is even more scandalous in the US –the leader in practically all scientific, technological and cultural fields–. Our embassy is likely the only one among EU countries that does not have a Science and Technology Office. Also, the lack of a coherent plan for public diplomacy at the world level means that the allocation of resources fails to include any calculation of profitability and the United States is mixed indiscriminately with other playing fields, ignoring the Hispanic factor entirely. New York, the best-equipped General Consulate, has to make do with 50,000 dollars a year as its cultural budget; unlike the other consulates, it has a consul assigned to cultural affairs. In Chicago the regular budget is only 3,000 dollars a year. In Miami, where 62% of the population was born abroad and 59.2% use Spanish as their first language (only 32% speak English only), budget resources finance a cultural centre –a hybrid public/private institution– whose programmes are entirely bilingual. This is the centre with the greatest resources: 300,000 dollars a year.

There are also three Cervantes Institutes in the US, two in New York and Chicago and a third housed in the Albuquerque Hispanic Center. They have the status of public entities. There is a project to open another Cervantes Institute in the old residence in Washington DC, and to open one or two on the west coast. The Cervantes Institute in New York has recently attracted media attention with the opening of its new headquarters and the appointment of its new director, the literary figure and intellectual, Antonio Muñoz Molina. He took the opportunity of his inaugural speech to make special reference to the Spanish-Hispanic issue: ‘New York is where there is a Hispanic culture’; ‘We must break the language barrier. Hispanic culture should be important not only to us, but should be part of the common repertory of the people of New York’; ‘We must take advantage of this upswing (of Hispanism and mass media in Spanish) to give globality to Spanish culture’. Among his projects, he mentioned the plan to include Hispanic writers, creators and artists in the Cervantes programme. Óscar Hijuelos (of Cuban origin, Pulitzer prize-winner), Esmeralda de Santiago (Puerto Rican) and Sandra Cisneros (Mexican) should not feel that they do not have a place in the Cervantes in the United States. Among the Institute’s programmes that could help us get closer to the Hispanics, we could consider doubling the Festival de Cine Español –which is held with exceptional success every year at the Lincoln Center– by adding a second edition of Spanish-language cinema –which the Barrio Museum has already tried out–. This year the Cervantes Institute in New York participated in the Mexico Now festival, using its auditorium to exhibit Buñuel’s Mexican films. In Miami, however, there are complaints of a lack of official support for the presence of Spanish cinema at the city’s annual festival –a festival that has introduced directors like Trueba and Almodóvar to the world, as well as actors such as Antonio Banderas, who is considered by Hispanics to be a ‘Latino actor’–.

In the United States, the celebration of the 400th anniversary of *Don Quixote*, in which the Instituto Cervantes will naturally play a leading role, should involve Hispanics closely, including joint events held with the Latin American countries represented in each city, with the participation of Hispanic cultural institutions, as well as the Hispanic print and audiovisual media in Spanish and English. It is worth mentioning that an agreement was signed with the network of Mexican Cultural Institutes (1998) to begin joint programmes with the Spanish consulates and the Cervantes Institute. The length of this agreement depends on personal and subjective factors and its results have not been appreciable, given the lack of resources.

Another unexplored avenue for approaching the Hispanics would be to establish regular relations with the top Hispanic think tanks and research centres, including the Pew Hispanic Center, with headquarters in Washington DC, and the Tomás Rivera Policy Research Institute in Claremont, affiliated with the University of Southern California. To date, they do not have regular or stable relations with their potential Spanish counterparts – the Real Instituto Elcano itself, the Fundación Ortega y Gasset, the Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE) and CIDOB–.

The Spain/US Council Foundation is a special case, since it has taken the initiative –with the Fundación Ortega y Gasset and the UIMP– to set up a Young Hispanic Leaders programme, now in its seventh edition with more than a hundred participants. The Foundation itself has held two important meetings that have been more than symbolic, the first one bringing together specialists and academics, directors of think tanks and research centres, community institutions and newspapers with their Spanish counterparts (Madrid,

February 2003); the second one was between Hispanic and Spanish entrepreneurs (Madrid, October 2004). A third meeting is planned with figures from the world of the arts, entertainment, fashion, music and literature –the wide and interesting world of artistic creation in general–.

The new technologies should not remain on the sidelines. Although the Hispanic population was late to join the Web, about 65% of the second and third generation are now connected to the Internet, almost the same percentage as the white population and slightly above Afro-Americans (Pew Hispanic Center). The technological and digital gap has closed for practical purposes. The belief that Hispanics on the whole have little to do with the Web and computers is just one more unjustified stereotype. According to a Nielsen study (2002), Hispanics' access to the Internet grew in the three preceding years at an annual rate of 13%, four times faster than the national average, triple the Caucasian rate (4%), double that of Asians (6%) and four times that of Afro-Americans (3%). Furthermore, Hispanic net surfers use the Web more than average to obtain political information and their Internet spending is only slightly below the national average (US\$480 vs. US\$577). In this context, it is worth noting that in Spain the economic weight of the language has been quantified as equivalent to 15% of GDP and of this, 10% depends on information technology (data from Martín Municio, Antonio Millán and Juan R. Lodaes), then strengthening the *Cervantes Virtual* is a profitable part of our project to approach the Hispanics. Efficient formulas should also be found to increase the interest and volume of Spanish-language content on the Web (which stands at barely 3% today) and to facilitate access to this content via the major search engines.

In the publishing industry and the audiovisual media, everything works according to the rules of the market. Direct public sector action to promote greater presence that could help strengthen the Hispanic connection is a doubtful proposition. However, a possible suggestion would be to give greater attention to producing Spanish translations of Hispanic literature written in English. These works are little known by Spanish readers and would establish another line of contact with the Hispanic world. In any case, since the early 70s, Spanish publishing groups have been present in the US market, which is increasing in volume at an accelerating rate. The Spanish Foreign Trade Institute (ICEX) recently commissioned a study that will make it possible to plan actions to strengthen the presence of the Spanish publishing industry, obviously heartened by the spectacular increase in the number of titles available in Spanish –rising in the past two years from 5,000 to 30,000– and by figures that are far from insignificant, such as the considerable increase in the surface area devoted to books in Spanish by the big chains of bookstores and the launch of bilingual Internet pages (Barnes & Noble, Borders).

Participating in radio/television is a complicated adventure, where the inevitable needs of the Hispanic/American partner combine with the legal limitations of foreign ownership. It seems likely that consolidating a critical mass of Hispanic/Spanish relations could interest Spanish television networks in entering alliances and co-productions with the big Hispanic networks in the US market, especially when certain alliances could be formed in the Hispanics' countries of origin, for example with Televisa in Mexico. Terra.com has already signed an agreement with Telemundo (NBC) to provide services in Spanish. In the written media, the MexiAmerica Media publishing group, based in Texas, has recently set up a new journalistic chain –Rumbo– in which Grupo Recoletos holds a stake.

In this cultural terrain, which borders on promoting economic interests (selling image ends up selling products), the autonomous communities can play a visible role. Some have already used the Hispanic connection to good advantage in their campaigns to introduce themselves and raise their profile in the United States: Andalusia, in Miami; Castilla y León in New York, with the agreement signed with the Graduate Center of CUNY and the creation of the Miguel Delibes professorship, in conjunction with the Fundación Duques de Soria; and, along the same lines, Catalonia, which established a Catalan professorship in the same centre; and Galicia, with regular courses on Galician literature. Castilla La Mancha has begun a Cervantes campaign, which transmits, among other messages, the fact that La Mancha exists as a geographic region, and that Hispanic academics have special authority to convincingly transmit that the scenes from *Don Quixote* are not simply a fiction created by Cervantes.

Economy

On the economic front, despite the income and spending figures, the options for approaching the Hispanic community are, paradoxically, less clear. The basic reason is the general framework for investment and trade between Spain and the US, which shows very small or unbalanced figures. Spain is the ninth biggest investor in the world, but holds only eighteenth place in the United States –a meagre 0.39% of total investment–. Meanwhile, US direct investment in Spain –which has been a factor contributing to innovation and aperture– in 2002 represented 54% of the total received by Spain (13.94 billion dollars). On the trade front, the percentages are tiny: the US imports only 0.5% from Spain (four times less than from Italy or France) and exports to Spain represent only 0.8% of their world trade (three times less than to France or to Holland). Spanish exports to the US amount to barely 4.1% of the total and, when exports to China, Japan, Russia, India and South Korea are added in, they come to a modest 6.7%, while Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Italy account for more than 50%, and Portugal, Morocco and Mexico represent 12.6%.

However, studies of economic opportunity indicate that, taking into account export and investment variables, the markets that are particularly interesting for the Spanish economy (apart from Morocco and China) are Mexico and the US, which are economically linked by the NAFTA agreement, with all that this could mean for Mexican presence among the Hispanic population.

Based on these general coordinates, we can draw certain specific conclusions that suggest an initial set of strategic options. However, it must be said that nothing indicates that a Hispanic company or importer would necessarily prefer a Spanish partner or supplier over an American or a Mexican one. The market and its laws are theoretically blind in this regard. Above and beyond cultural, historical or linguistic proximity are the quality of the product, its price, post-sales service and its technological advantages. Spanish companies now operating in the US market have found their niche by competing with American companies in general and with the Hispanics themselves, receiving no verifiable advantage due to their nationality. Even so, some Hispanic entrepreneurs encouraged their Spanish counterparts to take part in the specifically Hispanic market, suggesting that, compared to the Anglo-Protestant market or the EU market itself, the Hispanic market offered better opportunities, better returns and less competition. Also, it is a fact that Hispanic entrepreneurs are more clearly identifiable points of contact in the Hispanic context, in the sense that they have a pan-Hispanic strategy and are less divided along lines and interests based on national origin (in Florida, the Cuban issue; in New York, Puerto Rican affairs; in

California, immigration issues and relations with Mexico) and are more focused by the very general nature of market rules.

Another unquestionable reality is that the purchasing power of Hispanics is increasing at a constantly accelerating pace and that, according to the latest survey by the US Bureau of Economic Analysis in 2004, they are already very close to US\$700 billion (US\$699.78 billion) –an increase of 357% since 1990– which is similar to the income of the Afro-American population (in 2003 it was still lower: US\$652 trillion versus US\$687 trillion). The projections for this progression indicate that in 2010 this will reach a trillion US dollars –more than Spain’s GNP–. According to a recent study by the Inter-American Development Bank, US\$30 billion of this income is transferred to Latin America countries, of which US\$13.3 million goes to Mexico. This figure is higher than those corresponding to private investment or official development aid. A total of 75 million Latin Americans depend on these remittances, which favours stability and security in the region, so that the consolidation of the economic position of the Hispanics is of interest to Spanish investment in Latin America. Also, 42% of Hispanics own their own homes and, according to a Harvard study, are the most active real estate and mortgage market.

In addition to the above is the fact that Hispanic business is mushrooming, from small (atomised and disperse) businesses to those listed on the stock markets. According to the Small Business Administration and the US Economic Census Bureau of Minority-Owned Business Enterprises, nearly two million companies are controlled or owned by Hispanics. Their assets grew by a cumulative 247% from 1987 to 2004; they provide employment to four million workers and will generate a total income of US\$273.81 trillion in 2004. The Hispanic Business 500 (equivalent to the Fortune 500) grew from 1998 to 2004 by 40% and generated US\$26.3 trillion this past year. Services, manufactured goods and construction account for 72% of their jobs. There are 1,500 companies with annual sales of over one million dollars, which all together invoice US\$34 trillion, in real estate, financial services, the garment and textile industry, automobile parts, insurance, retailing, construction materials, food, media and telecommunications.

Many people will be surprised to know that a ‘Hispanic Index’ already exists and acts as a benchmark for the growth of big companies traded on the stock markets. There are 19 Hispanic companies traded on Wall Street (NYSE and NASDAQ) with US\$31.8 billion market capitalisation (four of them are media companies, 10 offer financial/banking services, two are retail distributors and the other three are in the health, telecommunications and agriculture sectors). Of these, 10 have been selected to create the Hispanic benchmark reference. The fact is that between August 2000 and August 2004, this index rose 125%, while the Dow dropped 7.3% and the SP fell 26.4%. Based on a level of 100 in 2000, the Hispanic Index now stands at 250, while the Dow is at 93 and NASDAQ stands at 50.

It is therefore beyond debate that the weight of the Hispanic market in the world’s most powerful economy is growing visibly. One measure of this is spending on advertising –in Spanish and in English– which is continually increasing and which will soon reach three billion dollars. This is related to the constant growth in the mass media aimed at Hispanics. A few examples that clearly demonstrate this include: the generalisation of the Nielsen ratings to measure audiences, competition between Univisión/Telefuturo/Galavisión and Telemundo/NBC, the appearance of CNN in Spanish, the creation of the Mexiamérica group in Texas, the founding of a national network of daily newspapers in Spanish (*La*

Opinión of Los Angeles, *El Nuevo Herald* of Miami, *El Diario/La Prensa* of New York and *La Raza* of Chicago), the new weekly Spanish-language edition of the *Wall Street Journal*, the increase in radio programming aimed at Hispanics, and the launch of AOL Latina and of ESPN Deportes (owned by Disney and the first cable sports network to operate 24 hours a day with programming in Spanish, competing with Fox Sports in Spanish).

But it is also true that the Hispanic economy is as segmented and dynamic as the community itself, requiring an attentive and intense effort to adapt to its conditions. The market requires a custom fit and the first generation –nostalgic and with lower income– does not ask for the same things as the second or third generations; while the former may shop for cheap goods at big chains, the latter need advice on financial investment or how to take out a mortgage to buy a home. BBVA has explicitly recognised this demand and, in a north-south operation, after buying the Hipotecario Nacional bank in Mexico, also immediately bought the Laredo National Bancshare and the Valley Bank, in whose area of influence there are five million Hispanics. With them, BBVA has also associated the 14 offices of Bancomer Transfer Services that operate in the American west.

Given this scenario, another pragmatic question arises. The liberalised and deregulated economies of the United States and Spain make direct government action practically unviable. Among the feasible options, with the Hispanic factor in mind, would be for ICEX to finance campaigns promoting and introducing Spanish products and services especially designed for Hispanics, preceded by general market and sectoral research.

It would also be possible to carry out tourist campaigns directly aimed at attracting Hispanic visitors, emphasising historical-cultural attractions. The fact that more than a million Hispanic families earn more than 100,000 dollars a year indicates that there is a large potential market that could help break up the heavily seasonal flow of tourism from the US.

The specialised magazine *Hispanic Business* is of the opinion that there are essentially three main difficulties facing Hispanic business: access to capital, the low level of professional participation in the financial industry and the limited options available in government procurement. Spanish entrepreneurs could develop projects aimed at providing financial muscle, whether by creating venture capital companies (following the model of PYMES, the largest venture capital fund for small- and medium-sized enterprises in Latin America, in which the Fundación Empresa y Crecimiento has a 29% stake and which includes the participation of large Spanish companies and the ICO) or by acquiring stakes in Hispanic companies; or else by transferring know-how and technology to companies in which they hold stakes, to enable them to compete in public invitations to tender.

This is the direction taken by the Club de Empresas Exportadoras Españolas (Spanish exporters' association), which has already established special relations with the Minority Business Development Agency, the Latin Business Association of Los Angeles, the Concilio de Exportaciones of Puerto Rico and with the publicly-owned Florida Enterprise, with offices in Madrid. It must be kept in mind that Miami, as well as being the city of reference for Latin American business, has become an important centre for Spanish business. From 2000 to 2003, the number Spanish businesses established in Florida rose from 225 to 350 (equalling the number installed in China), covering a very wide spectrum of activities from publishing to construction materials. Trade between Spain and Florida

increased in the same period from 723 million euros to 1.4 billion. The port of Miami is the sixth-largest in the United States and 18% of the containers that unload there originate in Spanish ports. Some part of the vitality and vigour of this relationship must be due to the comparative ease of relations with the Hispanics.

The possibility of initiating operations involving hemispheric triangulation between Hispanic and Spanish companies is one of the projects mentioned regularly, given the growing sophistication and variety of Hispanic entrepreneurial culture and the large number of Spanish companies in Latin America. This would contribute to creating growth and stability.

Conclusions

Silvio Zavala, a noteworthy Mexican historian and philosopher is the author of a reflection on 'The Invention of America', in which he makes reference to the meaning of the verb 'to invent' in Spain's 'Golden Century'. It was synonymous with discovery, a verb that in turn presupposed joint action: America was a product of the joint invention of the Spanish and indigenous peoples. Zavala was trying to turn down the heat of the controversy in 1992 between proponents of 'discovery or encounter' (adopting the conciliatory stance of Miguel León Portilla –the prodigious transcriber of the 'Vision the Vanquished'–) and of 'cover-up', the term used by Edmundo O'Gorman, another eminent Mexican historian. This is a pertinent allusion because in our relations with the Hispanics, we the Spanish find ourselves in the position of having to invent our role with the help and necessary complicity of the Hispanics themselves. In this attempt to invent, discover or meet, a few conclusions and specific suggestions can be made:

- (1) It is an unquestionable fact that there is a specific Spanish interest in establishing closer ties with the Hispanic world, inasmuch as Hispanics are an integral part of the United States and can help us better understand the reality of American society as a whole. We must come to a precise and rigorous understanding of the components of a complex reality, which in turn requires sustained and constant research, knowledge, contacts and familiarisation –necessary conditions to jointly explore the potentialities of a shared 'soft power'–. At the practical level, a position should be created in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation to monitor the Hispanic community, promote a strategic vision of the relationship and coordinate Spanish public and private bodies in their contacts with the Hispanics. The person in this position have the capacity to promote and propose the introduction of the Hispanic factor in political, cultural and economic initiatives with the United States, making them coherent and systematic. At present, only an 'Advisor for Hispanic Affairs' has partial responsibility in this respect, with very limited recognition or means at his disposal, while it is only due to simple inertia that there is a discretionary link between the General Sub-director for North America and the General Secretariat of the private Spain/US Council foundation. It would also be appropriate for the Hispanic world to be a permanent part of the exploration of the US reality by Spanish think tanks.
- (2) Personal connections are essential, once valid interlocutors are found in each area. This may seem an elementary conclusion, but the fact is that the desirable and necessary efforts have not been made on the scale required. We must speak with, and get to know, Hispanic politicians, the leaders of Hispanic organisations, entrepreneurs in all sectors, researchers and essayists, scientists and university professors, directors of Hispanic newspapers and magazines, professionals in radio and television and the

directors of cultural institutions. It is inexplicable that the El Barrio Museum in New York (directed by a Mexican of Spanish descent) is entirely absent from the Spanish museum scene; or that it was the new Modern Art Museum of Miami that took the initiative to contact the Reina Sofía Museum in Madrid.

- (3) One exceptional avenue for contacts and learning is through Hispanic associations and organisations. Alberto Moncada is very right when he says that ‘one of the symptoms of the Americanisation of the Hispanics is their progressive adoption of associationism, so typical of the host society’. Fukuyama says that ‘the propensity for voluntary association’ is a defining feature of American society, and has been adopted by the Hispanic community. A project for closer ties with the Hispanic world must necessarily include systematic connections with institutions such as the National Council of La Raza, an umbrella organization whose legendary president, Raúl Yzaguirre, recently retired after 30 years at its head, and which under his mandate acquired real prestige in the federal capital, by successfully unifying the interests of the various national groups with a pan-Hispanic vision. Yzaguirre did not officially visit Spain until the spring of 2004, accepting an invitation to Europe from the Friedrich Ebert Foundation of Germany. It is to be hoped that his successor, Janet Murguía, does not take as long to get to know the reality of contemporary Spain first-hand. It is also essential to have relations with the veteran LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens, founded in 1929), the NALEO (National Association of Elected Latin and Appointed Officials), the Puerto Rican and Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund, and with the Hispanic Association of College and Universities (HACU, which has already established links with the universities of Valladolid and La Coruña, and Oberta University in Catalonia); and to get to know the directors and take an interest in the activities of –among many others– the Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility (HACR) and the Hispanic Council on International Relations, focused on promoting Hispanic foreign policy interests. Civil servants, politicians and Hispanic scholars still most often speak of these institutions in an impersonal way, having had at best sporadic and superficial contact with the people who represent them. Relations between trade and professional associations should also be fomented. These already exist between lawyers’ associations, but they should be extended to medical associations and other professional organisations. It must be kept in mind that relations in the Commonwealth –with its pronounced ethnic, racial and cultural diversity– are bolstered by the fact that they are supported by about 70 professional associations that make a network connecting their respective civil societies in each member country. There is a clear lack of contacts between the Spanish chambers of commerce (and the Consejo Superior de Cámaras, which oversees them) and the US-Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the Hispanic Roundtable, or between the Spanish Confederation of Business Organizations (CEOE) and the New American Alliance (the most active Hispanic entrepreneurial organisation). Association or participation in the activities of some of these associations (forums, conferences, etc) would undoubtedly help to mutually raise our profiles.
- (4) Although the thesis of Román de la Campa is that ‘the Hispanics form an involuntary post-national community, in which cultural ties are not nostalgic or nationalistic, but rather have more to do with the consumption of products and services on the one hand and the development of a globalised citizen body on the other’, we must not ignore the fact that two thirds of Hispanics are of Mexican origin (Fox has publicly declared himself to be president of a country with 127 million inhabitants: 100 in Mexico and

27 in the US.) And Rodolfo de la Garza, vice-president of the Tomás Ribera Research Institute, maintains that more appropriate than speaking of the Latinisation of the United States would be to refer to the ‘Mexicanisation’ of the country (a thesis that is at the root of Huntington’s alarm). This would suggest the need to work on a strategic alliance with Mexico’s institutions and its extensive network of about fifty consulates in the US, aimed at joint cultural projects. This would require counterbalances in order not to trigger defensive reactions in any other group. It would be necessary to look into specific formulas for relations with Puerto Ricans, Dominicans and Cubans, which may not coincide with those most appropriate for Hispanics of Central American or Andean origin, even though all of them may share a common hemispheric project.

- (5) To complement this tactical vision of the various Hispanic communities, attention could also focus on geographical areas. While on the west coast and in the south-west projects are immediately conceived with Mexican coordinates, and in Miami the focus is predominantly Cuban and Puerto Rican (with the continual movement of people of Puerto Rican origin to Florida), more open, comprehensive projects would be appropriate in other places. New York is a great Hispanic melting pot where the dominant Puerto Rican presence is accompanied by practically the entire range of national origins, with increasingly significant contributions from other Caribbean countries, Andean countries and Mexico. The Big Apple could become an all-encompassing pilot project for investigating the possibilities of approaching the Hispanic world and a microcosm in which it would be feasible to try out projects that combine Hispanic and Spanish interests.
- (6) As in any strategic plan we must avoid taking the wrong steps, especially at the beginning. It is critical not to fall for the simplistic temptation to be or to become a common reference point for all Hispanics. The existence of a shared historical and cultural memory does not make us their representative, nor does it give us a role in homogenising their interests. This is true despite the misunderstandings in American society itself: the *Hispanic Yearbook* includes the Spanish embassy and consulates in its list of Hispanic embassies and consulates. And the Census questionnaires continue to associate Hispanic/Spanish: in the 1990 Census it asked ‘Is this person of Spanish/Hispanic origin?’; in 2000 this pair acquired a third part, but kept the Spanish reference: ‘Is this person Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?’. The Conference Board, a business organisation, in a recent survey on the Hispanic market, expressly included ‘persons originally from Spain’ in their definition of ‘Hispanic’.
- (7) Certain precautions must be taken even in the field of language, and we must be open to what is possible, avoiding dogmatic pronouncements, since there is no absolute unanimity in the Hispanic community regarding bilingualism. Some Hispanics support ‘English only’ as the fastest and least conflictive way for them to join the mainstream – just as there are those who defend and promote ‘Spanglish’ as a bond among the diverse groups–.
- (8) Observation on the ground (fieldwork) and recent meetings between Hispanics and Spanish lead to the conclusion that the most practical tool for approaching the Hispanic community is the very strength of the present relationship between the US and Spain. That is, it seems reasonable to assume that since Spain today has a greater presence and higher profile in the United States –a Spain that is open, competent, modern and capable of pragmatically linking its cultural and economic vitality to services and

products– the Hispanic world will conclude on its own that contemporary Spain is part of a new, globalised Hispanic world and that Spanish society participates in this new world with a similar cultural and social vision, expressed in a shared, living language. This new Hispanic world has been re-thought and re-worked, making it an asset on the world scene and, consequently, in the United States as well.

Epilogue

A final reflection to close. Any attempt to approach the Hispanics requires a double effort on the part of Spanish society and government: first, making the Hispanic reality widely known; and second, deliberately systematising actions aimed at approaching them. One is a campaign of propaganda, or ‘propagation’; the other involves a purposeful social and political will, which must be accompanied by human and financial resources. We must become aware that this *rapprochement* is a goal that must be achieved through a kind of sedimentary process of deposition over time, and will not be viable using heavy-handed means. There are no shortcuts or ‘silver bullets’ to enable us to reach this goal by speeding up the process. This is a long-term project, the dual result of approaching and gaining a better understanding of the US population in general and the Hispanic population in particular –since they are a constituent part of the former– using one line of approach to feed the other. For now, we have only just begun.

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