Towards a Culturally- responsive School Reform in Morocco

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Abstract:

This article investigates the question of school reform in public secondary schools in Morocco from a cultural perspective. Addressing the matter from this angle is of paramount importance. This is because of the centrality of culture in any societal undertaking; formal education lies at the very heart of every culture and society. In this perspective the article seeks to clarify the absence of this dimension of school reform in the official documents about education policy in Morocco. This will be done through a reading of the documents and comparing them with the findings yielded by the research in organisational culture, namely in cultural dimensions as elaborated by the Dutch cultural anthropologist Geert Hofstede.

Keywords: Cultural dimensions-school reform-cultural values- formal education- 4D model

1.Introduction

Much heated debate has been going on throughout the last two decades in Morocco concerning the question of formal education. In fact, reforming the Moroccan public school dates back to the early years of independence but the urgency of the issue has never been as pressing as now. If "Moroccanisation", "Arabisation", uniformity and "universalisation" were the prongs of early calls to reform the Moroccan school, the stakes lately have grown higher. The shift in emphasis, due to internal and external factors, has propelled new issues ranging from the urgent economic imperatives to the delicate question of political and social reform and far beyond to more complicated identity matters that globalisation has brought about. Consequently, a plethora of literature has been issued dealing with this subject both from official perspectives and ad hoc academic views.

Since the early years of independence, myriads of attempts were made to bring about the necessary changes to the Moroccan school system, but the results were either meagre or even disastrous. The political agenda of the post- colonial era, witnessed a frenzied debate about the French transformation of the once traditional Moroccan educational system during the Protectorate. Nationalist parties tried to counter-attack the residues of colonisation by calling for a Moroccan Arabic school. However, this was simply a political statement that bespoke of the complicated situation that colonization brought about. Infusing huge changes into the Moroccan school system during colonisation, the French certainly intended to guarantee the political and economic allegiance of one of its former colonies. Therefore breaking away from the French influence and setting up a clearly demarcated Moroccan school system has never been an easy task.

Starting from the Ifrane colloquium in 1970 about school reform and later on the cosmetic changes administered during the late eighties (the new Baccalaureate system) to the National Charter of education at the turn of the millennium and recently the Emergency Plan (2009) to reform the educational system, the outcomes seem to be far way back behind the aspirations. Henceforth, in default of a deep diagnosis that takes into account the question of cultural values and change from a sociological and anthropological viewpoint, the "technicist" top-down approaches to reforming the Moroccan school will simply duplicate previous attempts and defer the desired outcomes.

All over the world, the trend to incorporate cultural dimensions in managing economic, social and political changes has been taking ground during the last three decades. In fact management by culture has proven to be of key relevance for politicians and decision-makers regarding all aspects of human life. True many of the concepts related to this trend have originated in the field of economy but their generalization across other domains of human activities and interests has had far-reaching implications. After all, isn't the economy now the driving force of much of mankind activities? Isn't the plea now - that the school should adjust to its socio-economic environment- is geared towards how school can enhance economic performance?

Aided by the plenitude of anthropological and sociological research related to culture and management, decision-makers have resorted to research findings to design policies, work out strategies and poll people's opinions regarding a wide range of issues. Morocco, as a developing country is of course no exception. However, a thorough reading of the National Charter of Education (1999) and the more recent Emergency Plan (2009) shows that not much consideration has been granted to the cultural aspects of reform and this can impede change if it is not given its due.

2. Methodology

My research focus will be to investigate how cultural values and norms influence people's perceptions, assumptions and hereby performances in schools. This will be done through a triangulation strategy based on three prongs :(a). the findings yielded by the extensive research done

by Hofstede about national cultures (1994, 2004, and 2010) and which have included Moroccan national culture in its statistic population, (b) a narrative of the official documents issued by the Ministry of education and training in Morocco about school renewal and (c) conclusions drawn from unstructured interviews with teachers and parents together with personal observations as a practitioner for more than 20 years.

   The overall aim of this paper is to advance an understanding of the impact of cultural values on school reform in Morocco. Specifically, within the context of formal secondary school education reform, the objectives of this research are to:

1. Identify the core value dimensions that may impede reform if not taken into consideration.

 2. Explore the assumptions lying behind the rhetoric of reform in the plans suggested by the Ministry of Education in Morocco especially in the recent Emergency Plan (2009).

3. Formulate recommendations on cultural issues relating to school reform in Morocco.

3.Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions.

   The recent research in organizational culture has tried to create typologies enhancing and facilitating cultural analysis. The most cited among these are those elaborated by the Dutch cultural anthropologist Geert Hofstede, the researcher Shalom H. Schwartz and the anthropologists Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck. However, my focus will be on Hofstede's dimensions, as I will try later to apply them to the issues of school reform in Morocco.

the Dutch cultural anthropologist Geert Hofstede was working for the IBM Company and managed to conduct surveys and interviews in 53 countries during the period between 1978 and 1983. He then submitted the large data he gathered (about 116000 respondent) to statistical analysis. Thus he managed to discern patterns of similarities and differences across the different responses. From this data analysis, he forged his 4-D model about world cultures and how they significantly vary along consistent four fundamental dimensions. He was aware that all his respondents belonged to one multinational corporation, and thus to one company culture. For this reason he imputed their differences to the influences of their national cultures as embedded in their value systems.

In his seminal work" Culture's Consequences" (1980), Hofstede had already outlined four dimensions of cultural difference, known in the literature as Hofstede's dimensions. They are: Uncertainty Avoidance, Power Distance, Masculinity-Femininity, and Individualism-Collectivism. My focus in what follows will be on the first three dimensions since they are central in enhancing my study.

4.Power Distance

 For Hofstede, this notion refers to the way "people accept and expect" the sharing of power among them. It reflects the degree to which a culture conceives of power distribution within institutions and organizations, for instance within the family or inside a school. It is about how people in a given

culture accept or challenge the authority of the power holders. Authority of course is perceived in terms of age, social status, knowledge, and rank among others. Hofstede contends that:

Power distance can therefore be defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. Institutions are the basic elements of society, such as the family, the school, and the community.(Hofstede, 2010, P.61)

In his 2010 revised version, Morocco and Arab countries score high on the index (ranging from 0 to 100) concerning this dimension with 80 points. This means that Morocco has a large/high power distance culture (L/HPD). Henceforth, the Moroccan mainstream national culture is characterized by "a high level of inequality of power and wealth within the society" (Hofstede, 2010). Thus the people have a readiness to expect and accept that people in command (elders, leaders and authority figures) are likely to separate themselves from the group, since they are culturally endowed to lead. Likewise, the subordinates have to follow without any intention to subvert the normal state of affairs. This is viewed as part of the cultural and historical heritage and legitimacy. The question of power is clear within social and political institutions, ranging from family to school, administrations and political parties.

In his seminal work, "Master and Disciple: the Cultural Foundations of Moroccan Auhoritarianism" (1997), Abdellah Hammoudi excavates the ideological and cultural ground rules of this constant authoritarianism. In the synopsis of this much cited book, Clifford Geertz succinctly states:

"Building on the work of Foucault, Hammoudi argues that at the heart of Moroccan culture lies a paradigm of authority that juxtaposes absolute authority against absolute submission. Rooted in Islamic mysticism, this paradigm can be observed in the drama of mystic initiation, with its fundamental dialectic between Master and Disciple; in conflict with other cultural forms, and re-elaborated in colonial and postcolonial circumstances; it informs all major aspects of Moroccan personal, political, and gender relations. Its influence is so pervasive and so firmly embedded that it ultimately legitimizes the authoritarian structure of power."(Geertz, 1997)

4.1.Implications of high/large power distance to school reform.

Based on his findings, Hofstede outlines in his book "Cultures and Organizations" the various manifestations of a large power distance culture pertaining to the family, school and work place. In what follows, I will dwell selectively on the cultural characteristics of Moroccan mainstream national culture in relation to school and family; which in my view, should be taken into consideration while approaching school reform.

In the above mentioned book, Hofstede includes an extensive list of traits of high-power distance cultures in relation to school and family. Here are some, I deem fit into the scope of this paper:

_ Parents teach children obedience.

_Children treat parents with respect.

_Students treat teachers with respect.

_Teachers are expected to take all initiative in class

_ Teachers are gurus who transfer personal wisdom. (Hofstede, 2010 P.72)

Scrutinising the above traits, in relation to school reform, one can deduce that three agents stand salient as the stake -holders in the educational enterprise. These are: decision- makers, parents and teachers. Conversely, students remain the missing link in this power-relation chain. Henceforth, approaching the issue of power in the Moroccan school seems of paramount importance. Moroccan culture as a traditional one in a phase of transition poses many problematic issues that relate to the political, social and economic background.

The interviews I have conducted with teachers, together with my ongoing observations as a practitioner myself, confirm the results yielded by Hofstede's questionnaire concerning Moroccan national culture. Subsequently, I will illustrate how the cultural dimension of power distance has not been granted due weight in the recent charter of school reform. I will do this through a discussion of the points laid above.

4.1 .1 Parents teach children obedience/ Children treat parents with respect/ Students treat teachers with respect.

This is a salient cultural trait in the Moroccan average family that encompasses the school as a venue of socialization. Children from an early age assimilate that parents are authority figures that have to be obeyed whatever orders or requests they issue. They are knowledgeable as to what is good and what is bad for their offspring. Henceforth, early family socialization inculcates in the individual's mind that any attempt to challenge parents' control is sanctioned both under social and religious grounds. Here the issue goes beyond normal parental control to touch upon the question of power distribution and coercion at all levels.

By extension, teachers have always been included in the realm of authority figures. Indeed, the teacher has been upheld to perpetuate and even substitute the role of the parents. The now anecdotal Moroccan mantra "you slaughter, and I will rip off the skin" describes the overlapping roles of the father and the teacher as authority figures completely in charge of discipline. Their power and even violence are unquestionable since they are geared towards securing a better education for the child.

Failing to address the question of power in the Moroccan school system can pose a real obstacle to change or reform. The charter only hints at involving parents in their children formal education. Parents are to be contacted only when their children are noted to be low-achievers. This clause from the Synthetic Report reads:

"The teacher in his/her capacity as the prime interlocutor with the parents will communicate to them their children's school achievement and will help them to spot out-of-school reasons that may hinder students." (Synthetic Report, 2008, P.25)

As observation shows, parents have a much greater role to play. The school has to consciously carry on the kind of social upbringing students receive at home. This of course should be done by positively taking advantage of the influence parents have on their offspring. Their presence should be felt in schools in a way that will enhance their children learning process and thus improve their learning outcomes. Parental guidance and interference will certainly help in the process of schooling as the school itself has been conceived of as a "place of control" where" symbolic violence" may be legitimate as it has been ingrained through "habitus" as Bourdieu claims. In this vein Hofstede purports:

"People may blindly obey the orders of their parents and are less likely to question authority." (Hofstede, 2010)

Reliable evidence that I gathered from different practitioners, shows that there have been cases when parental interference-even through corporal punishment- has been efficient in curving down truancy as well as class discipline problems. My daily observations show that students try their best to avoid their parents being called for to help solving a school problem. Thus I deem it imperative to continually involve parents in managing their children's formal education. Moreover, it would be healthy to strengthen the ties between parents and teachers in the prospect of switching their roles of guidance and control. This should be done in a way to make the school an extension of the family, and to ensure the upbringing of a responsible, open-minded and independent student.

All in all, the concept of power here should not be approached from beyond the culture in which it generated. It should be viewed as a value inherent in the collective mindset that produced it over centuries of meaning making. Belonging to a high-power distance culture does not necessarily make of people submissive or coercive as individuals. The issue certainly is much more ramified than it seems to be as is people's cultural make-up.

4.1.2 Teachers are expected to take all initiatives in class / Teachers are gurus who transfer personal wisdom.
These two remarks drawn by Hofstede from his research in high-power distance cultures reveal the centrality of teachers in such cultures in the teaching- learning process.

The underlying implications of high-power distance in the teacher-student rapport have far-reaching influences on the whole education enterprise. Observation shows that students in Morocco still look up to teachers as authority figures; this is at least in the classroom context. A clear manifestation of this is that students usually prefix the name of a teacher with an honorific titles, such "teacher" or "sir".

Interviews that I have led with teachers have yielded very significant results correlating with the findings of Hofstede concerning this dimension. to teachers as well as students. Teachers claim that the change that the teacher's status has been subject to during the last two decades has influenced negatively the teachers' image and harmed the teacher-student rapport. Moroccan teachers look back now-with a lot of nostalgia- to the time teachers were so much respected and even venerated.

Excavating into the background of the change in the teachers' status certainly needs researching; however it is crystal clear that teachers as well as the community are no longer complacent about the professional image of the teacher. According to Hofstede(1994), students in large-power distance cultures expect teachers to take a leading role in the classroom. They are supposed to be initiators of the learning process, generators of ideas, supervisors, watchdogs and catalysts of any change of behaviour that results from learning in the Skinnerian view.

This attitude certainly clashes with the change that the reform is trying to inject in the teacher-student relationship. The reform- without any consideration to the cultural dimensions_ has tried to displace the teacher from his/her historical role in the public school and "to place the student at the very heart of the education and training system" (9).This claim certainly has its rationale in the recent research in education science and more specifically, in the teaching by competencies and standards and lately "integration". Nevertheless, these top-down approaches are now questioned even in the United States where they originated. (Fullan, 2007).

The new trend now in school reform purports that education is purely a socio-cultural undertaking that should not be addressed solely with concepts related to economy and the market imperatives (Saranson 1982, Fullan 1994). In this respect Fullan teasingly claims that we do not manage our families with economic standards and objectives. Levin (2001) contends that "school reform policies …were also driven by globalization forces that fostered an international perspective" (Levin, 2001). Unfortunately; Moroccan education reformers have joined the bandwagon and adopted these approaches. They are trying to infuse alien, imported concepts to a very traditional culture. The Synthetic Report speaks of "qualifying graduates to enter the labour market" , to customize learning through "the project approach" and "to adopt the competencies approach" (P.3)

Such top-down approaches are liable to face resistance due to cultural considerations. In this vein, Henry M.Levin declares:

"Schools resist reform because their operation depends upon a stable and shared understanding of culture that is the framework that integrates and defines school operations. That

culture is built on tradition, habit, expectations, and images of what school should do and be. To suggest that schools should change is to suggest that traditions, habits, expectations, and images be modified, a virtual impossibility." (Levin, 1976, P22)

This certainly explains why teachers are reluctant to engage fully in the reform. Interviews have revealed a deep frustration towards the different guidelines issued in different ministerial circulars. This can be imputed to the tacit refusal to relinquish the symbolic power that educators (learned and cultivated people and religious scholars) have been culturally endowed with across the many centuries of power fight, negotiation and distribution (Hammoudi ,1997).

   A clear example to delineate the reluctance to comply with the guidelines stands concerning continuous assessment and passing or failing marks. Teachers feel that the act of administering and grading tests and quizzes no longer bears its used-to-be importance. As I see it, this is simply because the power of annotating marks and thus passing or failing a student is no longer in their hands. The move to the new academy system in 1989 has left teachers with no control over students. For this reason, -among others- many educationalists trace back the free fall of the Moroccan education system to that move. The aftermath has been costly with different manifestations, such as the decline in school achievement, limited general knowledge and growing discipline problems coupled with a rise in physical violence towards teachers. Abdessalam Ben Abdelali (1994) even traced the rise of cheating in Baccalaureat exams to that era.

Another instance where this lack of compliance manifests itself is that of limiting teachers' role to implementing rigorous curricula without much space for personal creativity. Teachers feel shackled with the teaching of sets of lessons within allocated periods of time. Their traditional cultural role as knowledgeable, authoritative figures has been undermined. Many of the interviewees have confided to me that they have turned into mere course book page turners, ahead some pages of their students. For them, this is the safest approach. Gone are the days when arts and humanities teachers approached lessons content, each from his/her own perspective.

   All in all, the drafters of the Syntheic Report were aware of the seriousness of teachers' status in the Moroccan school. The report claims that one of its goals is "to restitute the dignity to the teaching profession" (P.4) but it does not say how. The only perspective mentioned in this respect is the financial one. However the report goes further to rhetorically ascertain more claims but always without operative strategies to apply them.

A clause testifying this goes:

The Moroccan school should restore its role as a pedagogical platform fostering students' self opening and learning. (p.35)

All things considered, there seems to be little or no awareness in the compound report of the overarching implications of power in the Moroccan school. The majority of teachers I have talked to are lamenting over the status of the teacher who has lost the long cherished aura of respect and knowledgeableness.

5. **Uncertainty Avoidance.**

Another dimension that Hofstede came up with in his research concerning national cultures is that of uncertainty avoidance. His definition of this dimension reads:

Uncertainty avoidance can be defined as the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations and try to avoid such situations. This feeling is, among other things, expressed through nervous stress and in a need for predictability: a need for written and unwritten rules.(Hofstede,2010, P.197)

On the index of this dimension (UAI), Morocco and other Arab countries score relatively high, around 68/100. This shows that Morocco can be classified among the countries which have a "strong uncertainty avoidance" tendency. It means that the people are not comfortable with unexpected and ambiguous situations. They tend to avoid uncertainty and dissipate ambiguity related to present or future actions. Novelty also may pose a threat to their normal course of life as they prefer to maintain the statusquo.

Hofstede cites many characteristics of cultures that have a strong uncertainty avoidance score. For the scope of his paper, I will delimit the discussion of these points to the ones I reckon have direct relation with school reform. These are:

-Students are comfortable in structured learning situations and concerned with the right answers.

-Teachers are supposed to know all the answers.

-What is new or different is dangerous. (Hofstede, 2010, P.205)

4. 1 Students are comfortable in structured learning situations and concerned with the right answers.

During the last two decades, Moroccan official academia in charge of school reform, have been tinkering with different methods and approaches. They have tried to catch up with the latest in the field of pedagogy. This started with teaching by objectives and moved to the competency approach then task and standard-based approaches and lately culminated in 2009 with the pedagogy of integration. Getting into the details of this pedagogical gyre is beyond the scope of this paper. However, they are relevant to mention since they are now cited with the many failures that the Moroccan educational system has known. The Synthetic Report includes instances of these failures. One is that Morocco ranked 44 out of the 45 countries that have been surveyed by the PIRLS assessment in 2007, and this concerning reading as a skill. Another telling instance is that yielded by

the TIMSS assessment in 2003, which put Morocco in rank 40 out of 45, and this concerning mathematics and physical sciences. (17)

The report drafters assume that this is due to the non -assimilation of the afore-mentioned pedagogies- which is purely technical- and fail to acknowledge the applicability of these approaches in the Moroccan context. What binds these teaching approaches is the fact they are all learner-centred and seek to make students responsible for their learning. Also students are supposed to acquire skills and competencies that are measured through standards and benchmarks. This is novel to both students who are used to simply receive and teachers who are accustomed to deliver their lessons.

Observation shows that it is difficult to implement the communicative approach to language learning. The resistance from students to engage in communicative tasks is always there. They claim to need very structured classical lessons with separate language points, such as grammar, reading, writing and find it hard to follow when I integrate skills. They even stigmatize teachers who do not give them clear, written lessons to learn as incompetent. Interviews and discussions I have conducted with them over the years show that they feel safe with full notebooks that they can have at hand.

5. 2 Teachers are supposed to know all the answers. / What is new or different is dangerous.

This cultural characteristic makes of teachers want to be knowledgeable and well-versed in their subjects and even in others. Of all the teachers I spoke to, few of them accept to tell students "I don't know", for fear he /she be described as incompetent. What is more, this attitude is a real pocket of resistance now while the Ministry of Education is trying to introduce information and computer technology (ICT) in the Moroccan classroom. A lot of din is being made these days about the downside of this technology in the teaching-learning process. Teachers are not ready to step down from their platforms and possibly face the sneering remarks of this new generation of teenagers who have turned into what a media specialist called "sceenagers".

To put it in a nutshell, many teachers operating with a high degree of uncertainty avoidance tacitly refuse to adopt these new methodologies. Having the say in everything that goes on in class and being the only source of information is part of their internal cultural make-up. Thus if the change is to materialize the reformers should target this attitude that is based on a solid cultural bedrock

6. Masculinity.

Another cultural dimension discerned by Hofstede in his research of national cultures is that labelled Masculinity vs. Feminity. Hofstede explains away the gender-bias that the terms might insinuate. He claims that this dimension pertains more to gender roles as assumed in a given culture. Masculinity for him describes the dominant values of a society. As examples, he cites

"assertiveness" and "competition" as characteristics of masculine societies. The gender social roles are clear-cut. He juxtaposes the two poles of this dimension in this way:

"Masculinity pertains to societies in which gender roles are clearly distinct. Men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life. Feminity pertains to societies in which gender roles overlap.... both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned about the quality of life." (Hofstede, 2010, P.140)

   Morocco and Arab countries once more score positively high on the index of this dimension, with 53 points, tending to be quite highly masculine cultures.

In his elaboration on the implications of masculinity to family and school, Hofstede draws an exhaustive list of characteristics from which I have selected only three which are very relevant to the question of school reform. These are:

- failing in school is a disaster.

- Best student is the norm.

- Brilliance in teachers is appreciated. (P.158)

I will deal with only the first two, since the third one is related to high-power distance, and has already been dealt with.

6.1 Failing in school is a disaster.

   Rhetorically, the motto that has been associated with the recent Emergency Plan 2009, bears a lot of resemblance to this cultural characteristic. It is " Jamiaan Min Ajli Madrassat Annajah" or " Together for the school of success". Ironically enough, this motto has come to substitute the previous one that was" Al Jawda "or "the school of quality". Rhetorically, excellence has been sacrificed for the sake of success. The Compound Report tries to diagnose the phenomenon of failing and school leakage, by making of the second a direct aftermath of the first. In this perspective, the report overlooks the real causes of failing to set goals for achieving a high rate of success. These two clauses from the report betray the intentions:

_ by the academic year 2014-2015, the rate of students who will have completed primary schooling, without having repeated any level, will get to 90%.

_ by the year 2018-2019, the rate of students who will have completed middle school without having repeated any level, will get to 80%. (Synthetic Report, P.18)

The report does prescribe operational steps to deal with low school achievement but how can we be sure of results ahead of functioning strategies? This only explains the ongoing obsession with results. Anecdotal reports from within the field, testifies of instances where teachers provide

students in the final year of elementary with answers during their final exam. Grade inflation has also taken staggering proportions.

The superficial concern with the phenomenon of failing that is culturally based on the afore-discussed dimension has not much helped the reform bureaucrats to look deeply for the real reasons behind it. Success is certainly a value; but it shouldn't be at the expense of other more valuable things such as integrity and excellence." Failing in school is a minor accident" as Hofstede himself claims in his discussion of feminine cultures.

6.2 Best student is the norm.

In a very recent ministerial memorandum issued by The Morocccan Ministry of education, we can find a clear illustration of how this other value still persists in the Moroccan culture. The memorandum inaugurates for an experience that is called "the Secondary School of Excellence". Three cities were chosen to pilot this project, namely Nador, Rabat and Guelmim. The students will be chosen from the best ones who have just completed middle school.

I do not question the good effect that this project can have on students' motivation, but there is certainly a downside to it. Excellence here is related to school results, that is to say to evaluation and marks, and these are not the only criteria to assess achievement. The issue of evaluation has become very questionable. We all hear stories about grade inflation for different purposes. Also assuming the excellence of the chosen students, what would become of average and "weak" learners in the absence of good students? The latter certainly enhance others 'motivation and foster cooperative learning. Thus secluding high achievers in certain schools will certainly make the others feel frustrated and may negatively influence their whole school performance.

Another instance when this cultural trait of "best student is the norm" interferes with performance and makes of the whole educational enterprise exam-oriented is the admission to some colleges and institutes. Students often complain that it is not fair to require a high mark to sit for the entrance exam. As teachers, we know that an exam should not decide about a student's whole career. All students should be granted equal opportunities and treated on equal footing.

7. Implications

Throughout this paper, my focus has been to delineate how cultural precepts and values shape people thinking. My objective has been to establish the nexus between cultural values and educational reform in Morocco. I have tried to outline how the intentions of education policy makers may be confronted with the underlying values and assumptions that different stakeholders in the education field hold. The 2009 Educational Charter claims to have as its overarching objective to adopt

"a new approach to education that should be modern with **a deeply rooted Moroccan identity**"(Synthetic Report, P.7) (italics mine).

However, digging deep into the clauses of this official document reveals very little considerations to the Moroccan identity and by extension to mainstream Moroccan cultural values. It is out of this care that I have sought to identify cultural values that may stand in the way of administering reform or change to the Moroccan educational system.

The underlying assumptions shaping people' values are to be heeded and cared for if any significant change in people's behaviour is to take place. However, Hofstede advises that some "cultural relativism» is necessary. It is not easy to postulate unconditional criteria about what is right and what is wrong. People acquire their cultural values from their entourage and through a process of socialization in which many agents interfere. Not all individuals of the same culture fit in a fixed pattern, but there is reliable statistical evidence that can help identify governing tendencies and trends.

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