Chapter 4

The Conflict Over Natural Resources: The Tree of Life and the Tree of Being, the Consumption of Natural Resources, and the Fish Wars

The practice of Sustainable Diplomacy will be determined by the ability of its proponents to engage people on the ground across a broad section of the population. Disputes and pacts between national governments often do not reflect the concerns of the populations they represent. For this reason, one of the principal goals of Sustainable Diplomacy is to move from the established vehicle of individual diplomacy to the practice of systemic diplomacy, which embraces dialogues, peoples, organizations, and concerns that are often ignored or marginalized at the national level. Sustainable Diplomacy therefore envisions a greater role for NGOs, for those who speak with a religious voice, and for many other groups and individuals who work to forge connections across barriers that are only now being named.

The task ahead will place great value on the ability of people to listen carefully before they speak and to listen to voices that have been relegated to the margins. We must return to a basic knowledge of how people live: where they find their food, how they manage to provide themselves with shelter, and what beliefs guide the pursuit of their goals.

Understanding Patterns of Consumption:
Daniel Palau i Valero and Muhammad Amouche

The interviewees presented here seem at first glance to be poles apart. The first is a 27-year-old Catalan seminarian from Barcelona named Daniel Palau i Valero. The second, Mohammed Amouche, is a 78-year-old Imazighn retired factory worker and farmer from a tiny village near the edge of the Sahara. Despite their differences, however, both are guided by a deep faith in God and an understanding of their own intrinsic connection to the land on which they live. In seeking an end to the ongoing dispute between Morocco and Spain regarding fishing grounds, the knowledge presented by the following individuals will be critical in understanding the points of commonality and
difference between Spanish and Moroccan patterns of consumption. At the same time, we must listen to these and other voices for wisdom that could one day be employed in constructing treaties whereby the Moroccans and Spaniards could share their natural resources with each other.

Daniel Palau i Valero

Do you grow the food that you eat?

No.

So where does your food come from?

I suppose from the multinationals and very little from the land. From the supermarket.

When you are in the supermarket, do you have an idea where some things come from?

I don't buy many vegetables, because I normally buy them in [my] village [since] I have that possibility, so... If I walk along the vegetable section, I don't ask myself where they come from. I know they either come from France, or from here, because they are vegetables that I see being grown in my village. Tomatoes, lettuce, anyway...

Do you know how to grow food or raise animals?

Animals no. But if I were in the countryside, I wouldn't have any problems growing many things, because my grandfather was (you are lucky with this question!) a farmer. So I went to the land with him and saw how he worked the land—potatoes, carrots, lettuce, tomatoes...

So can we say that your grandfather was the last person in your family who did this kind of work on a regular basis?

Yes.

In your opinion, what is the most important animal, plant, or tree in your region?

The most typical animal, here in Catalonia (because I'm talking about the land, I talk about Catalonia) ... well, many and at the same time none, because maybe I could talk about a cow, about a wild boar, which is a wild pig, maybe I'll stick to that one. Yes. The plant, maybe a rose, because they have many different meanings here in Catalonia. The 23 of April is the day of San Jordi and the children give their beloved a rose, or their supposed beloved. And the girl gives the boy a book. So the rose has the longest tradition here in Catalonia. A tree, ... well ... a pine tree, because it is the tree of the mountains and there is one tree in Catalonia, that is one with three branches, that is something special.

What is your responsibility in helping your next generation?

Look. Most of all, [to] give my testimony and not lose the history of our land, our country, and let the next generations know, so that they want to love their history more, the history of Catalonia, the history of their family, their personal history, and to let them get to know themselves better.